THE

MENNONITE CHURCH

AND

HER ACCUSERS.

A VINDICATION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF AMERICA FROM HER FIRST ORGANIZATION IN THIS COUNTRY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

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ELKHART, INDIANA,
MENNONITE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
1878.

PREFACE.

"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth, and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all Kings thy glory." Isa. 62 : 1.

For the sake of truth, for the sake of the church, and the many faithful witnesses which, in times past, have so earnestly contended "for the faith once delivered to the saints," the following work has been written.

The writer undertook this work with reluctance. He sincerely regrets that the necessity of this vindication ever existed; he would much rather have devoted his energies to a more pleasant task, but for the sake of the truth and the Church it would have been, in his estimation, a most serious neglect of duty, to allow such an unwarranted and untruthful misrepresentation of facts and doctrine to pass by unnoticed.

If our friends of the so called "Reformed Mennonite Church" did these things ignorantly, Christian charity demands that we should show them their errors. Should they have done them willfully and with design (which we hope is not the case), then again it would be in the highest degree, our duty to reprove and warn them of their uncharitable and unjust actions.

Though the writer in the following pages uses, oftentimes, what may be considered by some, as harsh and severe language, he was not actuated by any feelings of animosity or ill-will He is free to confess that even while writing his sharpest reproofs, his heart was moved with mingled feelings of kindness and pity for those who

under the garb of religion could venture on the assertions, charges and condemnations presented in Daniel Musser's "Reformed Mennonite Church", and it is the sincere prayer of the writer, that God, who giveth "liberally" to all men, "and upbraideth not," may bestow upon them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, that they may see their delusion, and in the true spirit of Christian love, self abasement and charity, turn to God, pulling out first the beam from their own eyes, that they may be able to see more clearly to pull out the mote from the brother's eye.

The writer sincerely prays to God to lead them into a better way, and if in anything that he has written he has erred and done injustice to any one, he asks God to lead him to see it and forgive him.

The writer also trusts that this little work may be the means of inspiring many with a firmer devotion and a warmer love to God and the church, while, at the same time it may prove a warning voice to many who are lukewarm in the cause of Christ, in showing them to what men may come, when they allow themselves to be led by selfish motives and human traditions to establish a righteousness of their own.

Elkhart, Ind., Nov. 1st, 1878. THE AUTHOR.

NOTE 1. A large portion of the matter contained in this work, was originally presented to the public in a series of articles published in the "Herald of Truth," and is now revised and with some additions and a few corrections published in its present form.

NOTE 2. It is only a matter of justice to remark here, that in the collecting of the material for this work, and also in the preparation of the matter, the Author has been assisted to a large extent by Bro. Amos Herr, of Lime Valley, Lancaster County, Pa.

CHAPTER I.

CLAIMS AND ACCUSATIONS OF DANIEL MUSSER AND JOHN HERR, WITH EXTRACTS FROM THEIR WRITINGS.

In the year 1873 a book, written by Daniel Musser, of Lancaster County, Pa., a bishop of the *Reformed* Mennonite Church, was published, of which we secured a copy and spent some time in its examination. The contents of the book struck us so strangely that for a long time we kept thinking over the matter whether we should undertake to expose its inaccuracies and ill-timed judgments, or whether we should pass it by in silent contempt. Some of our friends thought that such inaccuracies should not be passed over in silence, but a want of time and many other duties pressing urgently upon us, we deferred the matter until during the Summer of 1876, when we again took up the book, and in our reading of the same, we felt that in justice to the cause of Christ and his church we could not conscientiously remain silent.

The Reformed Mennonites are a sect which took their rise about the year 1812. John Herr was their first pastor. On many points they hold the same views as the Old Mennonites, but in other respects they hold most singular and unscriptural doctrines, as we shall show in the course of this work. They claim that there is only one true, Christian church in the world, and that they comprise that church. They utterly condemn all who do not unite with them, as Babel and in error; they refuse to hear any ministers, except those of their own church, and are very strict in shunning those who are expelled from their communion, and extremely rigid in the observance of all outward

forms and customs. They also claim that there was no church of God, no children of God, no forgiveness of sins, and no one that possessed or could receive the Holy Spirit before Christ was crucified.

We do not wish to be understood that we make any objections against those who are strict in the observance of outward rites; we commend them, so far as the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ require of us. We honor and love a man all the more when he adheres strictly to the requirements of the Bible, and is faithful in the discharge of the duties of his profession, but there is a difference between closely following in the footsteps of Jesus and observing his commands, and being strict in observing self-made laws, and the unscriptural traditions of men.

The writer of the book referred to, claims that the Mennonites were once a pure church. In the days of Menno, God was with the church and his blessing was upon her; that they were the true and living church of God, and that they remained measurably pure until about the close of the seventeenth century. As soon as the bloody persecutions, to which they had for so long a time been subjected, began to subside, and the Mennonites in common with other denominations, were permitted to enjoy religious freedom, they began to forget God, departed from his pure doctrines and the purity of their long and well maintained teachings, and gradually became corrupt—became very corrupt.

He claims that very probably, they were already, to some extent, corrupted when they first arrived in this country in the year 1683. And that from this time forward they made rapid progress to a complete corruption, and at the close of the 18th century they were a dead and impure church, without life, without righteousness, without truth, without the favor of God, and without any hope of future happiness; a church so completely lost to the favor of God that it was unworthy the name of a Christian church; forsaken of God, despised of men and without any of the qualifications which God demands of his church. Let us listen to his own words.

On pages 233 and 234 of his work Daniel Musser says: "Nothing so much provokes the enmity of the world, as to testify of her works, that they are evil. This provoked the Jews to such a bitter hatred of the Savior, who had done so much good before their eyes, and never done anything but good; but for this simple reason they hated him unto death. Even he had to be tempted through one of his dear disciples, to be more sparing in his denunciations, and he would escape their persecutions. (Matt. 16.) (The German version renders the approach of Peter more plain, than the English.) When this spirit gains ascendency, it will lead to silence on those points which are offensive to the world; and finally to the countenance, encouragement and support of such ideas and things as will please the world, and elicit its admiration and applause. In this way, the enemy, in times of peace and prosperity, insinuates himself, and finally, darkness overtakes the soul, and walking in darkness they know not whither they go. *Thus it seems to have gone with this glorious Mennonite church*, * which God had so highly glorified and adorned with the divine virtues, and so abundantly ministered unto her an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This glory Satan, with all his persecutions, imprisonments, torturings, fire, sword and rack, could not dim the lustre of. But by the enticing charms of the world, she was finally induced, *like Samson, to lay her head in the lap of this enchanting Delilah.*

On pages 236, 237, 239, 240, after referring to the question, whether the Mennonites were still in the true faith and practice when they came to this country in 1683, or not, he further says, "But whether they were in the true faith or not when they first came to this country, it is well known to those who are acquainted with the doctrines of Menno, and are at all conversant with the history and affairs of the Mennonites of this country, that they had very widely departed from the faith and practice

* The italic through the following pages are put in by way of distinction by the author of this work.

of Menno and his brethren, long before the close of the eigh teenth century. *This many of their own members freely acknowledged in the early part of the present century. Whether they would do so now or not I do not know.*

"The work on which we are engaged, makes it necessary to speak of this Old Mennonite Church, in a way which we would very willingly forbear to do, did not necessity require it of us. We hold that Christ established but one church, and that he can have but one. Adam had but one Eve, and Abraham but one Sarah. God had but one Israel, which had but one Jerusalem and one temple. So Christ has but one spouse, and we nowhere find any figure representing more than one united church; and if the church is the body of Christ, there can be no schism in it; for a kingdom divided against itself cometh to naught, and a house divided against itself cannot stand.

"The apostles built that church in the beginning, according to the command of Christ, as a house or home for his children to dwell in. Had it been built or established differently from his command, it would not have been his church, but a human institution, as all other organizations of man are. The Holy Spirit, which this organization possessed was what made it the church or spouse of Christ. Wheresoever this Spirit has His abode, there was the church of Christ; but he could not dwell in an *unclean, sinful, and disobedient body.* When our natural body dies, the Spirit does not die; it remains the same as it was before, but the body is dead because the spirit has departed from it. Thus the Holy Spirit is what gives life to the church, and wherever the Holy Spirit is, there is the church, and that is God's house and the home of his children. When that organization, which was a continuation of what the apostles had formed, became unbelieving and disobedient, the Holy Spirit no more dwelt with it, and it became a dead body, nothing different from any other human organization, however long it might have continued in existence. But the church of God was not extinct. Wheresoever two or three were met together, in the name of Christ, there he was

in the midst of them by his Spirit; and here was the church of God; and these were united, and one with all others in the world; for they were by the Spirit, which they possessed, baptized into one body and were made one heart and one soul. Thus though *this particular organization lost the spirit and life which made it a church*, the church was not extinguished, or lost. *Though this organization continued many centuries, it lost every mark, evidence or character of its original, divine nature.* However, many such organizations took place in different parts and ages of the world, so long as they were true and faithful believers, the life-giving Spirit abode with them; but when they would become unbelieving and disobedient, the Spirit would forsake that body, and however long the organization and form of worship might be kept up, it would nevertheless be but a spiritless, dead body.

"In this light we look upon the 'Old Mennonite Church.' We believe it was once the church of Christ, possessed of the Holy, life-giving Spirit, and so continued for many years; but as it had gone with the Roman church, (which was the continuation of the first organization), it became unbelieving, disobedient, lost the Spirit, and with this the marks or evidence of the Divine nature. *As such it had come down to the people of our* country at the close of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the present century.

"The originators of the organization known as the 'Reformed Mennonite Church' held, that Menno Simon and his brethren of his day, held sound and orthodox doctrine; and that the church which bore his name, at that time was the pure, true, and united church of Christ. To justify the course they took in forming a new organization, it became their duty at the time, to show that the Mennonite church of their day, whose organization had descended from this recognized church, had become *apostate, or a spiritless, dead body. This they freely did at the time, which brought them much enmity from many sources.*

"From all the evidence I can gather, I believe they were right in their judgment. *They looked upon the members of this church as unconverted, carnal people of the world, as all non-professors are.* We propose to show this from *evidence which I have never heard contradicted, nor do I believe it can be.* We will give traditional evidence of persons who lived amongst them, and *saw* and *knew* what they related; then written evidence, of persons of unquestionable character for truth; and lastly, my own observation of what I *seen, heard* and *know.*

"From such persons as were friendly to the church, I learned in my early youth, that at the time alluded to, viz: the latter part of the last, and the beginning of the present century, the members of the church were, in regard to inward or spiritual life, as *ignorant, cold, and dead as any carnal, unconverted person could be.* It was the custom generally, that when their children would grow up to years of maturity, they were baptized, and received into the Church; that *their preachers or teachers were altogether inexperienced, and ignorant in spiritual matters;* and, as a consequence, their preparatory instruction, and examination, was a mere matter of form. * * * *They had neither the knowledge of sin, or righteousness.* Their parents belonged to the church and they were told that they should also be joined to it. *There was nothing in the step which forbade the enjoyment of what the flesh could have life and gratification in,* and they generally agreed to the proposition of their parents. The natural result of such a course, was a carnal, cold and senseless religion. The *public service was generally cold and formal, and private religious exercises was something almost unknown.* They had their amusements and pastimes in rustic sports and plays, telling stories, jesting and making fun generally. They were generally what the world accounts moral, industrious, frugal and honest. But as there are always dispositions which tend to extravagance in conduct and behavior, there were not wanting many instances, where the conduct

rather exceeded the bounds of propriety; but there were so many precedents where these were passed over without notice, that *they had to be very flagrant, if any notice was taken of them by the church authorities*; and if notice was taken of them, it was often in a mere formal manner, which excited more merriment and sport in the church, than grief and sorrow. At that time spirituous liquor was more freely used in all families than at present; and *inebriation was a thing not at all uncommon*, and had to be very aggravated if any notice was taken of it. Cases were related to me, where members got outrageously disorderly and no notice was taken of it.

"It was a very customary thing, at the time we refer to, for the younger members to meet together on Sunday afternoon, from church service, and spend the afternoon in such sports as wrestling, jumping, running foot-races, playing ball, or whatever sports and games of the kind were in vogue at the time. The older members, with preachers, would look on as spectators, and had for a proverb, Honorable sports or diversions no one can forbid. At their marriages, feasting, drinking, and noisy mirth were carried to great extremes.

"At that time the old-fashioned fairs were annually held at all the towns of any size, even down to small villages. At Lancaster, the gatherings were usually very large. Numbers of the members of the church attended also. There was, as may well be supposed, all kinds of wickedness and ungodly deeds practiced here. I have no information how far the members of the church took part in these acts of wickedness, but by their presence they showed them such countenance as tended to uphold and support them. The old portion of the community usually attended the second day, when many of the elderly members also attended It was the custom of these old men to have their bottle of wine, round which they would sit, and often become partially intoxicated, and sometimes considerably more than partially. At this time nearly all attended elections, and many of them participated very actively in electioneering, to further the chances of their favorite

candidate. This I have myself seen, and heard one say openly, that he had on one occasion voted twice at the same election. These things were not of accidental or private occurrence. They were common, open and known to the world; and well known to the church also, and even some of their *preachers* were not free from the charge."

On pages 240 and 241 we find further the following: "John Herr, in his writings, from which I propose to make some extracts, makes some allusion to these things. I have heard that some of the younger members of the church say, they know nothing of such things, and assert that they are not true. It may be they do know nothing of it; but they have members of their church who do know better, and if they would, could testify to their truth; and the day is coming which will reveal it. When John Herr and his co-workers commenced laboring to build up a church, the 'Old Mennonites' generally, charged them with motives of enmity and selfishness, which prompted them to the course they took. This charge is now still reiterated, and the generation which has knowledge of the things referred to is fast passing away, and in a few generations more, or only a few short years, none will be left, who from actual knowledge, can attest to the truth of what he wrote. From my own knowledge and observations, I know that such things as he writes are true. In saying this, I know to whom I must give account, and it is to Him I appeal for its truth. I am sorry Herr was under the necessity of saying it, and still more deeply grieved, that the necessity exists for our re-asserting it. Much, yea, very much, rather would I have left these things to oblivion. There are yet many old members in the Mennonite church, who know well that these things are true; and if they think that their church is now reformed, and in a truly living and spiritual state, it would be much more to their credit to come out and say openly, that the time was when the church had fallen into such *shameful practices*, but she is now reformed, revived and renovated.

"They still, as a general thing, were plain in their dress,

and manner of life. They also still professed to be non-resistant, and refused to swear; but they very grossly violated their profession of non-resistance, by acts tending to countenance and abet warfare, and more especially, by seeking for redress of grievance, at law, and defending themselves at law against claims which they considered unjust. This was violating a very decided principle of Menno's profession. The washing of feet, if not rejected, was at least practically omitted for many years. The kiss of peace was very little, if at all practiced. The refusal to hear the service, or join in worship with those who reject and refuse to obey the plain commands of the gospel, together with avoiding excommunicated members, both of which Menno so strenuously upheld, they rejected altogether, and do so still, to the present day, in our part of the country."

"A church that does not walk in the love of God, must be destitute of the Spirit, and consequently a dead body. If the members of this church lived and walked as we have related, that tradition reports they did, they certainly were not obedient to Christ. Although there may have been exemplary and worthy characters amongst them, and even some who seemed pious and God-fearing, yet being cognizant of these things in other members, they could not obey Christ, without making such protest against these things, as would bring them to an issue before the church; and if the church would refuse to obey the gospel command, they must withdraw from them in order to full obedience. There were occasional withdrawals, as I have been informed, and these proved themselves obedient, and possessed of the love of God. But the mass who still clave together, and bore with those disorderly and carnal members, were surely not obedient, and, consequently, by Christ's own declaration, did not love Him. If they did not love Christ, they must surely have been destitute of the Holy Spirit, and must have been dead. I do not hold that every failure in obedience is evidence that a soul is void of grace. We are poor, weak creatures, and may be overtaken in many

ways. But when a congregation of people continue for many years to walk habitually and persistently in a carnal course and despite the motions of grace in the heart, and the protests and reproofs of others, I do not see how we can conclude otherwise, than that they are dead. On this ground, I conclude this church was dead, and I should like to see upon what Scripture grounds the position could be overthrown."

Quoting from the writings of John Herr he gives the following extracts: "But according to this, these of our time are far from doing, and esteem the doctrine of their reformer, in many points, but lightly. The cause of which, is this: Menno Simon's and Detrich Philip's writings and doctrine, sets their present community quite out of the order of Christ and His apostles, as in truth it is entirely out of that order; which is testified before the whole world, by their evident fruits.

"Therefore I will direct thee, my dear reader, to them. Search the above mentioned writings with an unprejudiced heart, and spiritual mind, and observe how they pictured the church of Christ, and how gloriously they set forth by the testimony of apostolic truth and Divine power, and which also their church members testified by their fruits and sealed with their blood; and when thou hast rightly apprehended this truth, then look over also on the present community with a spiritual eye, and view their fleshly life, their proud, arrogant deportment, and their careless, cold hearts in Divine things; their insatiable world-spirit, their dealing and their way, how sensual it is in every point, almost throughout the whole of them And when thou hast observed this, then go a little further, where thou wilt find a great many defenseless, unarmed men. Then ask the judge and the attorney; they will tell you that some of them are engaged in strife and law suits, as much as others. And then go on and ask the debtors and criminals; they will tell you that they see none more frequently on the seats of judgment, passing sentence upon them and assisting to judge them, than these. Then ask the tavern-keepers, and they will also tell thee that many resort thither,

who are lovers of spirituous drink, and from which even some of their teachers are not free; and if thou wouldst ask the race-riders and their like, they would tell thee that *they* also have some of them as spectators, as well as of all others. And if thou wilt search all these fruits impartially, according to the gospel, then thou wilt soon find that they falsely term themselves the church of Christ; and as far as the evening is from the morning, or darkness from the light, so far are they separated from our first reformers' doctrine or community, or from the community of Christ. And it is to be feared that the candlestick is removed from them, that they cannot see; and if even they do see it and do not repent, it will ultimately be taken from them, because they will not receive the truth which is yet offered to them." (Rev. 2.)

On page 262 he (John Herr) calls the ministers of the Old Mennonite Church, in his day, *false and unfaithful teachers, blind leaders of the blind*, and says, that it is manifest that they do not love Christ, because they do not keep his commandments. And on page 266 he makes the following remarks: "But these teachers not only suffer their brethren to go unreproved, but likewise the public sins that occur before the whole world; that is through the lusts of the eye, and fleshly gratifications, arrogant distinctions, yea, and sometimes they loiter in public places till they become *inebriated with wine*, which occasions disorder, and in general they lead such an *evil, dissipated life*, that the heart of the true Christian must bleed for them.

"All this, I say, they suffer to pass on, which is proved by their open acts, and even encourage them in it, when they come to the Sacrament or Supper, as if they were members of Christ; *and by this they show that they are in darkness*, for they love not the brethren, for if they had any love for them, they would pull them out of the fire (Jude 23). And since they neglect to do this, and much rather comfort them with the holy token of the broken body and blood of Christ, * * they are *man-slayers or murderers*, for they lead their souls onward to death under

a false comfort; so that they imagine all is well with them in the midst of their fleshly pursuits; and thus they rest in a deceitful security, till death overtakes them and bears them to eternity, where they shall knock and say, 'Lord, we have eaten and drank in Thy presence, (the Supper), and on the streets (or meeting houses) hast thou taught us;' but he shall answer: Depart from me, for I know you not.'" Luke 13.

Again on page 267, after speaking of the characteristics by which the true followers of Christ should be distinguished, he says, "But as nothing of this is seen in the present Mennonite society, but rather the reverse, with both teachers and hearers, as every godly person may see; so that according to St. Peter's doctrine, they must be blind, and 'grope as if they had no eyes, and stumble at noonday as in the night; and are in desolate places as dead men, for the way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.' (Isa. 59.) 'For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter.'" (Deut. 32.)

On page 268 friend Musser continues these extracts from the writings of John Herr, where he (Herr), says in the same connection and in reference to the same subject: "While on the contrary, the prince of this world, or the poisonous and corrupt vine, stands in the spiritual Sodom, in the midst of the congregation or church of darkness, and puts forth such fleshly and sour branches, from the corrupt moisture or sap, which produces bitter clusters, of which is born the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps (Deut. 32), namely, fleshly minded men, and members who bear the fruits of the flesh, which are hatred, malice, wrath, strifes, seditions, emulations, drunkenness, revelings, fornication, adultery, cursing, swearing, lying and deceiving, and coveting their neighbor's goods, having hearts overgrown with avarice, which is idolatry, and the root of all evil. (Gal. 5.) They seek after great riches and honor in the world, which is given to them, because they fall down

and worship him and serve him (Matt. 4), and testify by their works, what spirit they are of."

He further accuses the members of the church of a carnal, vain and haughty life, living in the lusts of the world and the flesh, of drinking and rioting, worldliness, buffoonery, &c., and that they "were no more circumspect in their walk" than he himself was, which is the usual way in which self-righteous persons justify themselves in their sins and short-comings. And in this manner he proceeds to show the inconsistencies of the Old church, to prove that they were dead, corrupted, rejected of God, and no longer a church. His writings througout breathe forth the very same spirit as the writings of Musser, or perhaps it would be said, with better grace, that Musser following in the footsteps of John Herr, received his mantle, and his writings breathe forth throughout the same spirit as those of his self-righteous predecessor and for the purpose of showing this fact, we have given the foregoing extracts from Herr's own writings as quoted by Musser. The kind reader should bear in mind that Musser fully endorses all these accusations of Herr and says, he *knows* them to be true.

On page 284 D. Musser says further: "There are yet people living (and of their own members too), who know that drinking to excess, revelry, strife and envyings, were very common amongst members of the church, and that the church generally (ministers amongst the rest), knew it, and no notice was taken of it."

On page 285 he accuses the older members of deceiving the younger portion of the community in regard to the truth of his assertions and other irregularities. He says, "There are old members of the church who if they would be candid, could relieve the minds of their younger brethren in this matter, and if they wish to tell the truth in relation to it, must admit it. They know it was a common thing for their members to sit on juries; that it was not an uncommon thing for them to have law-suits, and some of them being lovers of strong drink. I myself, know of different persons, who were commonly

reported at the time as addicted to drunkenness, and also seen them intoxicated; yet they were members till their death; and to my own certain knowledge their habits were well known to the preachers. Of their being spectators at race-ridings, I have seen myself in my younger days; and of helping to elect men to such office and position, as they themselves would consent, was not consistent for them, as Christians, to hold, it is scarcely necessary to speak, because it is yet very common amongst them; but not so general as it was then. But at that time they did not only vote, but were active politicians in their districts, causing bitterness and strife; which I have myself seen, and know to be true; and their elder brethren cannot deny it."

On page 286 he comes back again to the spiritual condition of the church and says: "But as their works were carnal, dead works, it proves that they had neither faith, love, nor the spirit of life. If even the members did not all indulge in carnal deeds, such as have been named of some, their ministers knew it well, and every intelligent member knew it; and as they did not reprove and purge the church of these offenders, it is proof that they themselves were destitute of the love of God and of his Holy Spirit and consequently dead."

Again on page 283 he says: "The carnal works which I have spoken of as having learned by tradition, I have from so many sources and from such authority, that I cannot help but believe it to be true. The whole church and the world well knew of their existence, and yet they were suffered to exist from year to year for several generations."

On pages 286, 287, he again compares the Mennonite church with the Catholic church and says in substance, that as the Catholic church in the days of the Reformers was dead and would not suffer herself to be reformed by those men, so also the Mennonite church was dead in the days of John Herr and would not consent to a reformation either from Kauffman, Landis, or John Herr, and speaking of Francis Herr in this connection, he certainly makes a most unfortunate application of

facts (as will hereafter appear), when he says, "Francis Herr, of this vicinity, became awakened in the last century, and after exhausting every means to make his brethren sensible of the error of their ways, he was necessitated to withdraw from their fellowship, as all his prostestations were disregarded and opposed. For many years he privately and publicly protested and cried aloud against the iniquity. The church would not hear, but slandered and defamed him, to drown the voice that sounded in their ears, as well as to neutralize its effect upon others."

Thus he goes on in his accusations, malignings and misrepresentations, repeating and rehearsing the same things so often that the mind grows weary in its perusal. His assertions are so full of expressions of doubt, probabilities, suppositions, unsubstantiated traditions, and unjustifiable conclusions that the careful and unbiased reader is involuntarily led, at once, to question in his own mind whether these things are not the products of prejudice, envy and self-righteousness.

These extracts from the writings of D. Musser and John Herr will serve to show the reader very plainly the general style, character and credibility of their writings concerning the Old Mennonite Church. D. Musser approves and endorses the writings of John Herr and on page 240, he uses the following strong and significant language, "From my own knowledge and observation I know that such things as he writes are true. In saying this I know to whom I must give account, and it is to Him I appeal for its truth." Of his own writing he says, page 285, "*I conscientiously believe it to be true, and if I am in error, I beg them to convince me by the Word of God*, and I will freely retract."

To judge from these quotations and many other remarks in the book referred to, the only conclusion we could arrive at, would be, that the Mennonite Church was, during the last hundred years, so corrupted as to have forfeited all claims worthy of the Christian name, yea, a sensual, debauched, pleasure-seeking, corrupted people. The whole gist and tenor of his

representations of the church, bear upon this one subject, viz: to make the "Old Mennonite Church" just as low and degraded, and contemptible and infamous as possible, and this he does according to his own admission, for the simple purpose of justifying the conduct of John Herr and his followers in organizing the "Reformed Mennonite Church." He admits that unless they can show the old church a corrupted church, they should have had no ground for withdrawing. The degree of pure benevolence, pure love for the souls of such great sinners, for a church so utterly blind and ignorant and the spirit of Christian love, possessed by Musser, becomes apparent from such a course. The correctness of the assertions of one laboring, in so large a degree, for the interests and justification of the actions of his own party or sect, should, under all circumstances, be subjected to a most careful examination. The strong prejudice under which the writer, in this case, is laboring, coupled with his own avowed object in view, are facts which naturally awaken doubt and suspicion, and his repeated assertions that what he writes is true, have a tendency rather to strengthen than to allay our doubts.

Now if these accusations are true, and if these charges can be sustained, then our church is certainly in a very deplorable condition, and we dare no longer boast that our forefathers of from fifty to one hundred years ago, were members of a Christian church ; neither can we (if we are the dead body which we are represented to be), make any such claims for ourselves. If these things are true, we must condemn the Mennonite ministers of that day as blind leaders of the blind, corrupters of the word of God, partakers of the evil deeds of corrupt and ungodly men, unfaithful, guilty of the most shameful neglect of duty, and entirely unfit for the sacred office they filled. We must look upon the brotherhood of that day as a combination of men, guilty of the most flagrant immorality and sunken into the deepest depth of spiritual corruption ; a sensual and carnal people, who could not in the remotest degree, lay any claims to the privileges of the church of Christ.

If these things are true, we must esteem the church of that day, as a body so corrupt that she had lost every virtue of gospel purity and was so dead to every sense of righteousness and holiness, that under her cloak men could be drunkards, deceivers, dishonest, defraud, break the Sabbath, gamble, dance and play, and indulge in all manner of sinful practices without reproof.

If a man has nothing better wherewith to justify his course of action, than the faults and failings of his fellowmen, whether such faults are real or imaginary, he is certainly leaning upon a broken reed; and the man who would establish his own righteousness, and justify himself by condemning, slandering, maligning and lowering the character of others, is surely not fulfilling the perfect law of love.

The inconsistency of these charges becomes the more apparent when we notice that after laboring very hard to make the members of the old church partakers of every evil work, charging them with being given to *shameful practices*, dishonesty, deception and falsehood, he says, "They are generally what the world called *moral*, frugal, industrious and *honest*," "good moral citizens faithfully fulfilling their moral obligations."

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERISTICS—MOTIVES—OUR POSITION—THE CHARACTER OF MUSSER'S TESTIMONY.

Slander is the complainer's great weapon. It is almost always the refuge and consolation of a dissatisfied mind; whenever one whose heart is not filled and restrained by the love of God, becomes dissatisfied with any person, an association of persons, a church or society, his grand resort is almost always to slander, and this is, most of all, the case with dissatisfied church members, members who have fallen under church censure, or who for any other reason have withdrawn themselves or been expelled from a church, and that especial church from which they have withdrawn, or with which they have once been connected, always becomes the target of their bitterest denunciations. When a man who did not enter by the door (Christ) but climbing up some other way, has found admission into the church and perhaps for years, been dragging himself along on its skirts, as a dead body, standing in the vineyard as a fruitless tree, occupying the place of a candlestick and giving no light, the subject of many prayers and exhortations, and the cause of much care and anxiety to his minister or bishop, is suddenly awakened from his stupor by some new sensation, in the popular theology or religious practice of the day, and allows himself to be led in the same path of insincerity and hypocrisy as before, by some blind leader of the blind, and vainly supposes that he now has found the true way and is converted and a true Christian, he at once sets up a tirade of slander and abuse against those with whom he was

once identified. Now a man could not tell it in plainer language, nor prove by a more unmistakable and stronger evidence that he never was a Christian and that he is not a Christian now, than by just such a course. Meekness and forgiveness, love, pity, and kindness, are Christian virtues and fruits of a converted heart; prayer for enemies and the conversion of the erring and the ignorant, and efforts to bring them to the knowledge of God, are Christian practices; but abuse and slander belong to the works of darkness; they are the products of an unconverted and an impenitent heart.

If John Herr or his successor Daniel Musser, had ever been members of the Mennonite church, we would feel that it was only the natural course which nearly all dissatisfied and unrenewed persons take to justify themselves when they need a reason for withdrawing from a church, but when we consider that neither of these persons ever were members of the Mennonite church, we fail to see any reason why they should try so hard to abuse, degrade, condemn, misrepresent and slander the Old Mennonite Church as they do, unless it be to make themselves a name and gain honor and popularity among men; or, unless envious of the stronghold, the well-established reputation and superior numbers of the Old church, they are seeking from selfish motives, to supplant and destroy her. In either case, the motive is so far beneath all Christian dignity (to say nothing of the false statements it contains), that it seems to us impossible that any one making any claim to the Christian religion, could so far forget his calling as to stoop to such uncharitable, such unfeeling and wholesale denunciations as appear in this work. And the pretense that all this is prompted by the spirit of love and done from a sincere conviction of duty, for the good of the Old church, is truly one of the most peculiar claims we have ever heard. It is practically just such an illustration of the teachings of the Gospel, as war Christians present us with, when they pretend to obey the Savior's precept, "*Love your enemies*," by taking the weapons of death and going out to destroy their lives. The whole account of the Old

Mennonite Church given in this work, indeed, seems to be a master-piece of pharisaical, self-righteousness and egotism unequaled by any author of the present age, while the multitude of conjectures, suppositions, expressions of doubt and the relation of circumstances of which he acknowledges that he does not know whether they are so or not, at once stamp it as entirely unworthy of the smallest degree of credence.

In our attempt to show the sincere reader, that many of the statements so uncharitably made by Daniel Musser against the Old Mennonite Church, are altogether incorrect and untrue, we wish to be distinctly understood that we make no claim to perfection as long as the church is composed of frail, imperfect, human beings. We do not claim that the Old Mennonite Church, is a church without spot or blemish, that she has no unfaithful members among her numbers, and we do not believe that there is a church, of any considerable number, upon the face of the earth (the Reformed Mennonite Church not excepted), that has not some members that are untrue, and who are more of a discredit to the church than otherwise. There was a Judas among the twelve apostles, the little number whom Jesus had chosen as his special followers; there was an Ananias and Sapphira and others who unworthily crept into the Christian church in its very earliest days, and should we presume to be more sagacious, better judges of human nature, and better able to disclose the secrets of men's hearts than even the heaven-inspired apostles of eighteen hundred years ago?

We believe and teach that the church should be kept pure; that is, when members become transgressors and it becomes known, it is the duty of the church, as required by the gospel, to expel the offending member or members from her communion. This doctrine the Old Mennonite Church has always maintained, taught and practiced, even during the very period of time in which Musser and Herr claim that she was so very corrupt and altogether without discipline, as will appear hereafter, and as Musser also acknowledges in several instances referred to in his book.

That there may have been members in the church who manifested no good light, who were more loose in their morals than they should have been, and that there were even ministers and bishops who were less rigid in their administration of the affairs of the church, than the gospel requires, we will not deny, for as we above remarked, we do not look for perfection in imperfect, human beings on this side of the grave; and if the Old church had, and still has, weaknesses in this direction, the Reformed Mennonite Church had a greater weakness, by endeavoring to display, adorn and beautify her own perfections by pointing out the imperfections of the Old church, and basely falsifying and misrepresenting her. Pharisee-like she seems to stand in her lofty temple, thanking God that she is not like other men, or even like this poor publican.

If our light is so dim that it will not shine unless we first extinguish our neighbors, we ought to gather more oil and put it in better trim. If our actions, our walk and conversation can not prove edifying to the world without we disgrace our neighbors, we ought to set about improving ourselves in the Christian graces, and if a church cannot stand on its own merits, and prove a power and exert an influence on the world without stooping to degrade its neighbors, it proves that the church is not the church of God, for the Savior says, "Upon this rock will I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." Thus the promise of God is with his people, and his church should look for the blessings of heaven unto him who has promised and is faithful, and build the house of the Lord in faith, seeking to gather, to bind up, to heal and to lead the erring ones to the true fountain of life, and not cast down, destroy and scatter. Besides, according to the above promises, if the Reformed Mennonite Church is the true church, as they

claim she is, then all that the Old church could do would not affect them; she would prosper and grow notwithstanding, and hence there would not have been the remotest necessity for the slanderous production which Musser has so greatly exerted himself to produce.

To judge a man by one act of his life, by one word from his lips, by a single manifestation of his moral or religious character would be unjust. No prudent man would do it, and no one, whether of good or bad character, would be willing, on any matter of importance, to be thus judged. A whole chain of words and actions are sometimes linked together, the development of which often throws a very different light upon the subject of our investigations. So in forming a just estimate of the condition or character of a church we should be thoroughly acquainted with the church in general, with her doctrines, teachings and practice. This knowledge should be obtained by repeated and continued observations, and the testimony of impartial and unprejudiced witnesses; not from flying and uncertain reports, or from persons who are the open opposers and enemies of the church. Neither would it be right to convict and condemn a man upon the testimony of persons who were prejudiced against him, or who from selfish motives would be inclined to testify against the accused unjustly; to do full justice, we need unprejudiced witnesses, an impartial jury and an unbiased judge.

This is the prominent error of D. Musser in his attack upon the Old Mennonite Church. His testimony is in a large degree traditional, and both his traditional testimony as well as that which is written, is mostly, if not altogether, from persons, who, because they could not be allowed to dictate to the church, or for other reasons, became dissatisfied and withdrew from the church, or who as transgressors were expelled, or from such as had never been members at all, but were strongly prejudiced against the church. In this manner he is able to make an apparently very strong case, but we shall be surprised,

if the injury he has sought to do to others, will not in the end rebound with double force upon himself.

Christian Kauffman, whose testimony Musser gives, was, according to his own statement, disobedient to the requirements and long established customs of the church, and when he found the church would not yield to her well established rules, he became dissatisfied and withdrew. Under such circumstances it could hardly be expected his testimony could be other than what it is—derogatory to the church. Abraham Landis, whose testimony is also given, was evidently a similar character, looking only on the dark side, finding fault with everything and everybody in the church except himself, and not being able to rule, he is determined, if possible, to ruin. Full of self-righteousness, he knows only to tell of his own good works, while the actions of others are all wrong.

John Herr, who may be considered the founder or father of the Reformed Mennonite Church, never was a member of the Old Church, but having wholly devoted himself to the New Church, and risen to its leadership, and his church, to a great extent, a rival of the Old Church, and he with many of his followers strongly prejudiced, and no doubt somewhat hurt in his own feelings, on account of the expulsion, from the church, of his father, Francis Herr (of whom we will hereafter speak), we can, of course, expect nothing else but the severest censures and denunciations. The impartial historian could never venture to base the record of any event upon such testimony, if he desired to give a faithful account of it. But this is just the kind of evidence from which D. Musser draws his conclusions, and declares that he believes they are true, and that he *never heard them contradicted, and does not believe they can be*, and that from his own personal knowledge he *knows* them to be true. Let us see.

One of the most unhesitating statements which D. Musser gives in his work, in connection with his long parade of corruptions, in the Old Church is, that Francis Herr, the father of

John Herr, was a member of the Old Church, but that because the Old Church became so corrupt he could no longer, with a good conscience, remain with her, and that on this account he withdrew from the church. Musser takes considerable pains to show that Francis Herr was a very good and devoted Christian, and that he stood high in the estimation of his neighbors and friends, and that his pure principles, pious walk, and the general demoralization of the Old Church, led him to separate himself from her, and contradicts what we have above intimated, namely, that he was expelled for misconduct.

We shall here be under the necessity of saying what we would rather not say. It pains us that the necessity for saying it exists, but in justice to the truth, we beg leave to make the following statement: Francis Herr was a member of the Old Mennonite Church, but how he graced the Christian profession will appear in the course of our remarks. He was called to account by the church for unfair dealing and dishonesty toward a neighbor, in connection with the sale of a horse. The church requested him to make recompense and confess his error. This he refused to do, and consequently was expelled from the church, and from that time forward began to abuse and malign her. This statement, however it may vary from that given by D. Musser, can be substantiated by a number of persons whose testimony is unquestionable, and who know whereof they affirm: it is the testimony of men who are so perfectly familiar with the circumstances that there can be no mistake about it, and we feel sure that if friend Musser had made the effort, he could very easily have obtained an account of this matter, much more in accordance with the facts in the case than the one he has given. Musser stoutly denies that Francis Herr ever was expelled from the church for the misconduct above referred to, but the account which he gives of it, is so full of suppositions, uncertainties, doubts, and conjectures that as a reliable and authentic account it has no value. *

* See further the testimony of Susan Herr and remarks on a subsequent page.

We see that D. Musser was not only unfortunate in the selection of his witnesses, but doubly unfortunate in giving place to an article and confirming the same, which the most positive and indisputable evidence condemns as incorrect and untrue.

It just seems to us as though Musser felt, when he wrote his account of the character of Francis Herr, that he was treading on uncertain ground. When a man states facts it seems to us altogether superfluous for him to make so great an effort to prove them true. The truth will always vindicate itself, and a fact will always stand on its own merit; but when men make a doubtful declaration they feel that they ought to say something to prove it true, and this seems to be just the case with these statements of Musser. We would much rather believe that it was the result of incorrect information on the part of friend Musser, and draw the mantle of charity over his weakness, but this strong effort to unpopularize everything that belongs to the Old Church forbids any other conclusion than that which we have given, much as we wish we could have some hope of being mistaken, and that his intention was a great deal better than his writings show.

Let us now direct our attention to the consideration of evidences and testimonies which set forth the condition and character of the Old Church in that period of time in which Musser so unhesitatingly condemns and denounces her.

CHAPTER III.

HOW WE MAY KNOW—THE OLD MINISTERS—WRITINGS OF HENRY FUNK AND OTHERS.

Being naturally of a modest turn of mind, it is with a good deal of diffidence that we venture upon the task of showing, to the impartial reader, the true characteristics and condition of our church, during the eventful period in which our accusers and defamers claim she was so corrupt and fallen.

We would rather leave the delicate task to another; we would rather bear infamy in silence, but we believe it to be a duty we owe to the church and to posterity, to give, at least, a fair and true representation of facts as they existed. We would, however, discard and avoid every appearance of egotism and selfishness; we would rather ourselves bear all the unjust accusations and shameful slanders which selfishness has prompted men to endeavor to heap upon us, than to overdraw the picture in our favor. We have, however, taken pains to inquire of older persons, who well remember the condition of things, and the ministers of that period of time, during which, according to our friend Musser's statement, the church was so very corrupt, and we have not yet found one who could say, or who knew of the existence of such a state of affairs as that presented in the book referred to in the preceding chapters of this work.

We have already admitted that there were unfaithful members, and that there may have been unfaithful ministers in the church; there were weak brethren and there were those who were not zealous of good works as they should have

been, but a few unfaithful members did not constitute the church, neither could it be maintained on this ground that the church was a corrupt church.

We wish the reader to bear this in mind. It is our purpose to illustrate more particularly the condition of the church, than the life of individual members, (though to some extent this may also be necessary), and for this purpose it will be needful for us to investigate, to a considerable extent, the lives, actions, teachings and conversation of the ministry; their writings (if any there be); the dealings of the church with transgressors, which in addition to traditional testimony will no doubt give us a very accurate representation of the condition of the church, and so present to us the evidence of the truth, or the untruth of the charges made.

The public teachings of a church are generally a very good criterion of its inner life and doctrine. The Savior teaches that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." So according to the measure of light and the measure of the Spirit of God, which a man possesses will he preach. Hence, if a man is sincere in his heart, his preaching will declare the spirit and character which he possesses. So in writing. A letter, an article, a book tells a great deal, not only of the man, but also, the spirit of the man.

In this manner we may form a very fair estimate of the men who lived and labored in the Mennonite church, three quarters of a century, or a century ago. Though they are dead, yet they speak. They are gone to their reward, yet their influences remain, and their words are not forgotten; their works still do follow them.

Now let us look at the words and works which they have left us. Ask any of our old men what they can say about the ministers of their day; the old ministers whom they can remember when they were young. What kind of men were they? Were they the light-minded, frivolous, vain, corrupt, pleasure-loving characters represented in the book of D. Musser, and the writings of John Herr? Go back in your mem-

ories! Listen again to the solemn cadence of their voices as they re-echo through the plain, old meeting-houses, and hear their solemn appeals, and how they made you almost tremble as you felt in your hearts the solemn truths that they uttered, and you know if you had followed their instructions as you ought to have done, you would have been better men, better women. Tell me they were unconverted and corrupt men! Tell me they did not have the love of God in their hearts! You dare not utter the word! You know better; you feel now, "If I only was, what they were; if I only possessed now the grace that they possessed and manifested, how good it would be for me."

Listen again to their pious conversation when they visited your house; the good advice they gave you; "Oh!" you say, "If I had only listened better to them, and obeyed their instructions, I should have done more for my Savior than I have." They were men who were strong in the Lord, and whose influences were felt wherever they went, in public and private, and we love to think of them and live over in our memories again the sweet thoughts with which they inspired us. "Oh," said a dear old brother recently of these very men, "Young as I was when I united with the church, I cannot say that I did not know what repentance was. They called us together from time to time for months, and instructed us in the truths and doctrines of the word of God." The custom in those days was to hold young converts under instruction for a period of from three to six months.

Then read the writings of these men and you will feel that there was something more than the empty jargon which fills such a multitude of the so-called religious books of to-day. Read if you will, the writings of Henry Funk, of Christian Burkholder, of Abraham Godshalk, of Benjamin Eby, and others, and then judge what the representatives in the Mennonite Church of that day were, and see if you can discover in all these things, traces of the corruptions charged against us.

We shall first refer to the writings of Henry Funk. He

came to America in 1719 and settled on Indian Creek, in what is now called Franconia Township, in Montgomery Co., Pa. After a number of other brethren came and settled there, he was chosen to the ministry and afterwards ordained to the office of bishop. He was a faithful and zealous minister, and during his life did much for the advancement and progress of the church. He and Dillman Kolb supervised the translation of the Martyr's Mirror from the Dutch to the German and certified to its correctness, the first American edition of which was published at Ephrata, Lancaster County Pa., in 1748. He also wrote considerable, and his writings prove him to have been a man of more than ordinary abilities, a deep thinker, and a careful Bible student. His "Mirror of Baptism" was first published by Christopher Saur, in Germantown, in 1744, and has since passed through at least five editions. He also wrote a volume of over three hundred large pages under the title of "Erklaerung einiger Hauptpunkten des Gesetzes," in which he gives an explanation of some of the principal parts of the law, their fulfillment through Christ and their signification under the gospel dispensation, in twenty-five parts or chapters. This work was published by his children in 1763, three years after his death, and was printed by Anton Armbruster in Philadelphia. It was also reprinted in Biel, in Switzerland, in 1844, and in Lancaster, Pa., in 1862, and is a very interesting and valuable work. *

From the foregoing it will be seen that the time of the life and labors of Henry Funk was through the first half or two-thirds of the eighteenth century, and from his writings we may gather, at least, some idea of what the church was and what her teachings were during that period.

On page 109, in the edition of 1763, in the article, "*The Priestly Office of Jesus and His followers*," he says, "Therefore, let every one of my kind readers well consider, how that Jesus is

* For some of the above facts we are indebted to "Notes" by S. W. Pennypacker, in the article, "Mennonite Emigration to Pennsylvania," in Pennsylvania Magazine, No. 2, 1878.

a Being of the most incomprehensible greatness. Isa. 4 : 10–12 ; 41 : 4. He is, 'The mighty God, the everlasting Father (Isa. 9 : 6), a Stone and Kingdom that fills the whole earth.' Daniel 2 : 35, 44. Such an indescribable Being is Jesus. Thus he is also the indescribable King of kings, an indescribable High Priest; and just so indescribable is his raiment or priestly apparel, and his royal, high-priestly office, and the sacrifice which he brought into the Holy of Holies and accomplished for us such an indescribable great joy; and just so indescribably great is the number of souls which he brought from death unto life, from the *beginning of the world until his second coming at the end.* Thus also by his blood he has brought forth an indescribable Church, Tabernacle, and Temple, both on earth and in heaven, which shall remain eternal in eternity. In this eternal Temple, Jesus is the forever-abiding High Priest. All this Jesus accomplished by the sacrifice of his body and blood, by his suffering, death, and resurrection. *Therefore every soul should draw nigh unto Jesus with a true, living, and active faith,* and submit to him with body and soul, that they may possess this glorious High Priest both in this present time and in eternity."

Again, on page 111, he says: "There sitteth the High Priest, in his glorious, priestly office and raiment, on the throne of his glory, and on his raiment, in his heart, he has the breastplate of the New Testament, filled with light, love, and righteousness, in which he speaks, from above, from heaven, in the spirit of his wisdom, through his servants (2 Cor. 5 : 20), and by his Gospel exhorts the fallen sinner to come to him, and be reconciled with God, not by the law of Moses, with oxen and rams, and such like offerings, but with the offerings *of a broken heart, a broken and contrite spirit* which are well-pleasing to God Ps. 51 : 17. Therefore, shall man come to the High Priest, Jesus, with a living faith in him, with *repentance and reformation* of life, with the laying aside of the works of sin and the putting on of righteousness, with the full conviction that Jesus has full power to forgive sins, and that he is

the only High Priest, in whom and through whom alone we can obtain reconciliation with God. When man comes to Jesus in this manner, Jesus will be to him the merciful High Priest that desireth souls of this character (Matt. 11 : 28); that he may release them from the burden of their sins, and give them the easy yoke of his love, that they may serve him, and he desires to receive them as Levites and priests instead of the firstborn (Num. 3 : 12), to serve in his Tabernacle, Temple and Church."

Further, on page 112, after referring to Jno. 17 ; Heb. 7 : 25 ; 1 Jno. 2 : 1, 2, we find this passage, "Such a great High Priest is Jesus, that all men that come to him in true faith, *repentance and reformation*, may through him, and the sacrifice which he made, come to God."

On pages 112 and 113, he further says, " But Jesus in his priestly office is much more perfect (than Aaron and his sons), because he not only sees the outward impurity of the leprosy of sin, in man, but he also sees and knows the hidden impurity of the heart. Mark 20 : 23. When such impurity arises or makes its appearance in the house of God among believers, Jesus, who seeth in secret, warns them through the Gospel, to cleanse themselves from such impurity of heart. If such warning is accepted, and men lay hold of themselves, by the grace of God, to purify themselves from such impurity of heart, with a sorrowing and penitent heart, Jesus our High Priest knows it at once, receives him as pure, forgives him his sins, reconciles him with the Father and retains him in his house, in the spiritual citizenship of Israel. If, however, a man does not reform, but goes on in his evil ways, he will through his evil thoughts, exclude himself from those spiritual gifts, so that faith, love, and the peace of God, will no longer have any influence with him. If a man then sees and finds that his heart has become so impure and corrupted, that the divine influences, as faith, love, and peace, and whatsoever more belongs thereto, do no longer affect him, and that his exclusion by the High Priest is near at hand, and he

becomes concerned, and reforms himself with a sorrowing and penitent heart, Jesus, the great High Priest is ever at hand to notice it, and will by no means reject him if he repents, but much rather forgive and before the Father reconcile him. If a man, however, will not leave the deceitfulness of his heart, evil thoughts will take possession of him, which will corrupt him and produce an evil leprosy full of sin and blasphemy, of which we have the first example in Cain (Gen. 4 : 5, 8), and still a more perfect one in Judas. Of this leprosy, and wickedness, which have no place in the Temple and Kingdom of Christ, the Scriptures speak in Gal. 5 : 19–21 ; Rom. 1 : 21–32 ; 2 : 5, 9 ; Rev. 21 : 8 ; 22 : 15 ; 1 Cor. 5 : 11. Observe well, where such a leprosy of ungodliness and sinful corruption appears in man, before the all-seeing eye of God, without true repentance, they are in the Holy Scriptures, by the High Priest, Jesus, *excluded from his house and from his kingdom* as we have shown above. When, however, he who is taken in this leprosy of sin, is able by the grace of God in this present life, to see his sinfulness and leprosy, and becomes conscious that on this account, he has been excluded and expelled from the Camp, by the Lord; and with the King, Manasseh, enters within himself, and exercises himself *in sincere sorrow and repentance* on account of his many sins, praying and sighing to God; and with the prodigal son returns to the Father; leaves the herd of swine (which are the many sins) and ungodly works, (Luke 15) and turns, in faith, to Jesus, with repentance and reformation of life, then the offering, the body and blood of Jesus, the High Priest, with which he entered into the Holy Place, is yet so powerful that it again makes full satisfaction for all the sins which he committed, so that man is again received by the Father as a son, in the fullness of divine grace, and by command of the Father clothed in the best garment, the garment of righteousness, and the Father with his house (the angels) rejoices over the event. Luke 15 : 10, 22, 23.

"If, however, man in his selfishness and wickedness of

heart, refuses to accept the grace of God unto repentance, which is taught in the Gospel by Jesus and his ambassadors, he, according to the words of the Gospel, must remain excluded, and Jesus remains a High Priest forever; and at the last day he will make a separation between the leprous and the clean, between the sheep and the goats, and place the goats on the left, out of the kingdom of God, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. But the sheep he will place to his right, into eternal life, where will be fullness of joy forever and ever. Let us as children and priests of God, hasten and seek through Jesus, to obtain an entrance there."

From the foregoing, the reader will readily perceive what the teachings of the church were in the middle of the last century. It is true we present here the testimony of a single preacher, but there were but a small number of churches in the country in the days of this writer, and these churches, according to reliable and trustworthy traditions, were united in the strongest bonds of union and fellowship. Services were held at an early day, at Germantown, Pa., where the first church was organized in 1683, and at Deep Run, not less than thirty miles distant, and also at Skippack, or what is now known as Franconia, where the writer, above quoted, resided. The ministers from the different churches frequently visited each other and aided them in their services. And a little later, in the days of Christian Funk, who was a son of Henry Funk, and ordained to the office of Bishop by his father in 1757, only three years before he (Henry) died, we have written evidence of the warmest co-operation between the several churches then organized. And as far back as we have any tradition, there always was a warm intimacy between the churches in Conestoga, (Lancaster County) and those of Skippack or the more eastern counties. From this fact we may reasonably conclude that if the brethren of that day maintained such a warm intimacy between themselves in their labors and efforts to build Zion and extend the influence of

the church, they must have been of the same mind, taught the same things, preached the same doctrines, and lived by and practiced the same rules.

Another proof of this exists in the fact that in 1763, three years after the death of Henry Funk, his writings were published. The book contains 309 large pages, and was well bound in leather, and must have in that day cost a considerble sum, and it is not likely that the book would have been printed if there had not been manifested a demand for it. Had Henry Funk not been a teacher, teaching such doctrines as the church—the people at large—desired and believed to be good and profitable for the brotherhood, there would have been no demand for the book. Hence we have here a testimony of considerable force, showing that the church believed in, and had a desire to read and promulgate just such a doctrine as that book contains, and that doctrine is certainly the doctrine of the Gospel, and as a certain writer, in a recent work says, contains nothing that is "contrary to the writings of Menno Simon."

This view of the matter is also confirmed by the fact as referred to above, that in 1744 the "Mirror of Baptism" was published, and in 1748 the translation and publication of the large Martyr's Mirror was completed at Ephrata, and an edition of 1,300 copies circulated in a very short period of time. When we consider that all this was done by the church in America, without any assistance or encouragement from their wealthier brethren in Europe, * and while the church here was comparatively weak and possessed of small means, it does not show as though either the ministers or the church at large, could have been so unconcerned about the welfare of the church and their children as Musser and his friends desire to make it appear. On the contrary, the zeal they manifested

* In fact the brethren in Europe, to whom they had written for advice on the subject, delayed their answer about two years, and advised them not to undertake the publication of so expensive a work.

in this direction, seems to show much more that both ministers and people, were especially interested in the work of the Lord and the maintenance and promulgation of the doctrine they professed. The desire manifested for the circulation of these excellent books seem also to bear strong testimony of a true, spiritual life. If they were what they are represented to be, by our accusers, then it seems to us they would have had no taste or desire for the class of reading contained in these books. The carnal, worldly-minded man would care very little for such reading as is contained in the books above referred to.

As another evidence of the condition of the church about the close of the last century, and just before, we will give an extract from the writings of Jacob Stauffer, who, though in after years, not a friend of the Old Mennonite Church, still at this time, bears an excellent testimony in her favor, which has only so much the more weight, because it was written at a time when his prejudices were against the church. If one speaks well of a person or a church to which he is not friendly, it shows that there must be an undeniable truth in the facts presented, which an honest mind will not allow even prejudice and hatred to overcome or deny. Stauffer * was born in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and lived at the same time as John Herr, and hence had a very good opportunity to judge from the testimony of the older ministers and members, of the character and condition of the church during the latter part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, until the time of his death; and in regard to this subject, says Holdeman, "*He writes the contrary*," of what Musser writes. According to Stauffer's writing it would appear that the corruption of the church had its commencement between the years of 1800 and 1830. "*During this period*," says he "*Satan sought to bring the beautiful and prospering church into cor-*

*From John Holdeman's History of the Church of God.

ruption." But "during these years there were still many faithful witnesses in the church, who sought to avoid every appearance of evil (Thess. 5 : 22), and with a sincere desire, through prayers and supplications continued before God, and with his help endeavored to walk before the Lord, in faithfulness, purity, uprightness and love, and who at all times testified against the beforementioned things and all that could serve to the ruin, corruption, and desolation of the church, in order to preserve the church pure and separate from the world, just as Jesus ordained and called her." Stauffer's Chronik, Pages 128 and 134.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN BOEHM'S DEPARTURE—DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH SET FORTH.

We now present our readers with the contents of an old manuscript, a copy of a statement made by the ministers of the Mennonite Church of Lancaster County and vicinity, about one hundred years ago, giving us a clear representation of the character of the church during that period of time, in which the church, is said, by her accusers, to have had so far departed from the faith, doctrine and practice of the old fathers of the church.

We regret that we cannot give the exact date of the manuscript, nor the names of the bishops, ministers and deacons who constituted the Conference which acted in the matter. But the fact that the matter was brought before the Conference, and that the Conference labored to effect a reconciliation, proves that the Conference was united in the views brought out by the manuscript, and that we may safely accept it as a reflection of what the church, in that vicinity, not only believed, but also practiced.

From the best evidence that we can gather, and the inference of the manuscript, we are led to the belief that these events must have occurred about the year 1775, or between 1775 and 1780. This seems to be indicated by the reference in the beginning of the manuscript, to war, desolation, famine and sword being in the land and very near at the door. And also from the fact that Christian Kauffman, in his relation as given by Musser, says, "He had some acquaintance with

Martin Boehm, and frequently attended his preaching." Kauffman says that he was baptized in 1780, and as he speaks of Boehm separately from the Mennonites, it must have been after Boehm had left the Mennonite Church. Hence Boehm must have had left the church, at all events, sometime previous to 1780.

This manuscript, though not written in very good style, shows very plainly, not only what the church at that time believed and taught, but also what she practiced, and how she held transgressors, and in what manner she dealt with them. To this purpose it is especially valuable at this time. It is throughout a very cogent argument against the unjust and indiscriminate denunciations of our accusers, and forms the connecting link between the time of the death of Henry Funk and the close of the eighteenth century. It reads as follows:

"Since the great God, the God Shaddai, the Almighty, who alone is good, and who himself is love, and who, through Jesus, as the eternal truth, teaches us, that as we discern the signs of these present times, so we should also discern what is right for us. We are compelled with terror, fear, and sorrow to realize what Christ taught, that, When a kingdom is divided against itself, it comes to desolation; and a house divided against itself shall not stand. This desolation, famine, hunger and pestilence, with the sword of revenge, exist in the land, as a punishment and a severe judgment, and stand before us very near to the door, and all this exists on account of the great sins which the children of men have in various ways committed.

"Experience, however, proves that the sword, war and bloodshed will not lead men to unite together in meekness, humility and love; for instead of love and faithfulness, we find that pride, covetousness, deception, and back-biting, have (not by all but by many), gained a powerful hold. But that which is the most deplorable is, that even as in the kingdom of this world, there is discord, confusion, and dissension, so

also in these sad times, these same things manifest themselves among those of the same faith, and those who should teach the same things, and be of one mind in Christ Jesus, and for whom Christ himself prayed that they might be one, as he in the Father, and the Father in him are one; for unity and love are the ensigns of the children of God, as Christ teaches, that thereby 'shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.'

"Now while the enemy of peace still seeks to sow abroad the seeds of dissension whereby disunity arises, even among those who profess to walk in the narrow way, the admonition of the apostle to the Corinthians, is very needful, in which he says, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.' Because he had learned that there was dissension among them, and that one called himself by this name, and another by that name, he gave them this sharp reproof and admonition, that they should not take flesh for their arm, neither put their trust in men, but in Jesus alone, who was crucified for us.

"Now, however, it is a well known fact that between us and Martin Boehm, there is, in many points, a difference of views, and we have, at times, for several years already, labored to become more of one mind and to understand each other better, that we might be found faithful laborers in the church of Christ; which, however, has not yet been accomplished, and the matter has, from time to time, become worse.

"For the reason, however, that the brotherhood do not possess as good a knowledge of the cause and origin of this disagreement between us, which consists in many things both in words and deeds, as we do (although many also are not entirely unacquainted with it), we have thought it prudent to write them and thus explain the matter.

"In the first place, in that, in which we believe that he (Boehm) erred in the doctrine of Christ, he had a great deal

to do with forming a union and associating with men (professors) which allow themselves to walk on the broad way, practicing warfare, and the swearing of oaths; both of which are in direct opposition to the truths of the Gospel and the teachings of Christ.

"In the second place, he also receives such persons as were under church censure, or not in good report, or who were from one reason or another not at peace. In regard to the first accusation, it was believed by those who had to do with the matter, that it was not proper for any one who professes to be a witness of the truth, so to do, since Christ teaches us, to observe all things, 'whatsoever he commanded us;' and the most important and the greatest commandment which God gave us through Jesus Christ, is, 'To love God with all our hearts,' and where such love exists in the heart of a minister, it will lead him to show men the errors in which they stand.

"In the third place, in regard to those who became his followers (of such as were under censure), or whom he received, it was believed that if he had rather admonished them, and sought to convince those who were under censure, of their sins, whatever they might have been, and would not have received their complaints, he would have been enabled to do more good, and those who were not in peace, he should have directed to observe the rules of the church, and exercise the spirit of forgiveness; and if both he and we give the same testimony against such cases, we believe, we would be able to accomplish good results among the people.

"Through these and many other things besides, originating from an exchange of views, all of which cannot be given here, a difference has arisen between us, so that some thought him worthy of the ban. He also said some things which caused great offense, as he maintained that Satan was a benefit to men. This was then stated, and he (Boehm) was reproved, and was advised to turn back in true repentance, and recall what he had said. We believe and acknowledge

that, if we do not, according to the teachings of Christ, endeavor to show men the error of their ways, that we are at fault. We did not mean to forbid him to preach; he should have liberty to preach everywhere, only he should do as Christ teaches, 'Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' In consideration of this, those who were more strongly opposed to him, agreed with those who advised this, that on this condition, that is, if he should obey and do as he was advised, they would be satisfied. If he, however, would not obey, nor do as he was advised, they would hold him as before. He then made an acknowledgment, but not such an acknowledgment as was desired; he simply said, in substance, That he knew that he was weak and imperfect, and where he had transgressed against the gospel he was sorry for it. But that which was really the cause of the offense was not removed, for he manifested by his actions that he was not penitent, as he did afterwards just as he had done before.

"Thus the offense remained and became greater, as he added other offensive expressions to those already given, as before intimated. On one occasion he said, among other things, in a public discourse, 'The Scriptures might be burned,' for at that time there was much talk by him and those like him, that the word was a dead letter.

"His first declaration, 'That Satan was good and beneficial to man,' was contradicted by many, because Satan is the great enemy of the human race, and through him sin and entire corruption was brought into the world, and it required the life and blood of Christ again to release us from the power of darkness.

"In regard to the burning of the Scriptures, it was indeed admitted that paper and ink, in themselves, were dead and might be burned; but the word in itself is, as Christ teaches, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life;' and since 'man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' and as

Jesus himself points us to the Scriptures, he says, 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' and since the Holy Scriptures were instituted by the Holy Spirit, and given us as Paul says, by inspiration of God, as a book of doctrine and instructions, such expressions are improper, and should not be used.

"On account of these things and others, all of which can not be given here, he (Boehm) was required the second time to make an acknowledgment; and since he had not done as it was required the first time, it was done this time with the counsel of the church. It was required that he should make a full acknowledgment of the charges that were brought against him; and if he should obey, they would all, according to the teachings of the Savior, forgive him and be satisfied. Upon this he made a partial confession, but the chief cause of offense he did not recall.

"It is a most solemn thought! Some of the aged laborers who were not satisfied with him, have passed away, and we and Boehm are also on the way to eternity, where we must all appear before the judgment bar, and where there will be no difference and no respect of person, and where men must give an account of every idle word which they have spoken. And since Boehm after this acknowledgment which the church required of him, pursued the same course that he had before, and did not regard the advice of the church, we believe that we and the church both erred, and did not keep ourselves as closely to the word as we should have done, although not entirely without cause, for we continually feared what is now before us, a division in the church. Efforts, however, were continually made to bring us nearer to one mind, and to understand each other better, and sometimes it seemed as though he would yield, but after all, it now appears that our efforts were in vain. Sometimes it appeared that the more we withstood him, the more he and his adherents opposed us, and as Paul testifies, it is now manifest that in

the last times there will be those who think more highly of themselves than they ought to, and with sorrow we must see in these sorrowful times that it is among us, as Paul long before, through the Spirit pointed out, when he says, 'Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.'

"We have already referred to the perverse words which he spoke, but this was not all, for afterwards he said other things just as much out of place as these; for he acknowledges publicly and maintains that faith cometh from unbelief, life from death, and light out of darkness. But when he tries to explain the words, he points to how man by sin departed from God, and God from him, and how man is in an unhappy condition, in unbelief, in death, and in darkness; and how God through Christ must again release man, or the soul of man from the power of darkness and death, and how Paul testifies that 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' With such arguments as these he tries to prove the above mentioned assertions, and to show that they are true; but according to our understanding of the matter, it is impossible to accept this explanation as correct.

"It is incontrovertible that unbelief, death, and darkness are qualities of the devil; and what these powers produce, they produce in accordance with the qualities they themselves possess. Boehm does not ascribe to these powers that they accomplish these things, only he wants to maintain that thus it is. But faith, life, and light are attributes of the invisible, living God, and if a single soul becomes enlightened, believing and alive, it comes from him whose power has produced it.

"Therefore, when Christ was asked, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Christ said, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' Faith, therefore, is the power of God through which man turns away from unrighteousness to righteousness, of which Paul testifies, That those who believe are risen with Christ,

through faith which God worketh, and again, that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith.

"In regard to the saying, that life cometh out of death, Christ teaches us that as the Father hath life in himself, so also hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, as John, speaking of Christ declares, 'In Him was life.' And John declares that 'We know that we have passed from death unto life.' Paul speaks of the believers, as of those that were dead and were made alive; but he does not say that life cometh from death, but praises God for his great love that when we were dead in sin, he with Christ made us alive, and so gives God the glory that he, through Christ did this.

"Finally, concerning the declaration that light cometh out of darkness, John testifies that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness.' Therefore, when Paul says, that 'God commanded the light to shine out of darkness,' he did not say that light comes from darkness, for the light infallibly must come from him, who commanded it to shine forth. Christ teaches us that he is the light of the world and that whosoever believeth in him may not be in darkness. And John says of Christ, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness:' and further, 'That this was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Hence we acknowledge that we believe that it is improper to make such expressions as above given, for they are not in accordance with the truth, and thereby we do not give to God the glory which belongeth to him.

"It was ill received from Moses that he did not give God the glory when he was to smite the rock, and instead of reverencing the name of God, and giving him the glory, and acknowledging that the Lord would give them water, he spake unto them, 'Must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?' On account of this, Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land.

"Hence we see that God will have the words which he commands obeyed; and though men set up words, the inven-

tion of human reason, which contradict the teachings of truth, we are not to accept them; for there is only *one* gospel, and if any one should bring us another, and if he even were an angel from heaven, we are admonished not to receive it.

"We also have to say that at times the rules and ordinances of the church are very disrespectfully spoken of. A complaint was brought against Boehm and testified to that he had said, 'That the old men (Bishops and ministers), or men, lay so much stress upon the ordinances, viz: baptism and communion, and the people are thereby only led to the devil and not to God.' Boehm, however, denied it with the words, 'That he would not have so spoken.' He was then asked how he had said? He answered, 'That he did not know so well any more, but that such were not his views,' and called upon many witnesses who said that he had not so spoken. The question now arises when a preacher speaks in public meeting and makes use in his discourse, of words that are offensive, and there are two, or three, or more witnesses who testify that he did use such words, whether others can rise up and say that he did not use such words. We think it will be hard for them to do so. They could not properly say that they heard or understood it. We will, however, leave these witnesses on both sides to their own merits, and give that which we ourselves heard from his own lips; for as he explained himself at that time, upon the testimony, as to what he had said, he expressed himself in accordance with his belief, and had no reference to any particular people, but spake in general terms of the world, and that there was so much stress laid upon the ordinances, and on the manner in which the world observe these ordinances, they lead more to the devil than to God.

"Now the question is, whether the ordinances are commands of God or not? Are they commands of God, as we believe they are, it is very ill spoken of any body to say that they lead to the devil. Our God is good, and all things

that come from him, and whatsoever he commands is good, even as He is good, for Christ says. 'The Father which sent me, gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting' If the Father's command is life everlasting, it follows that not the ordinances, but unbelief, as the power of Satan, leads men to eternal ruin. For we acknowledge that the ordinances which are commanded us in the gospel are only types and guides of true, spiritual life, for the outward baptism of water represents spiritual baptism, and how man must, through faith and repentance, die unto sin. The suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus represents the life of his followers. Thus the apostle Paul makes it very clear when he says, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death?' For when this body of sin, that is, the sinful inclinations, is laid aside, then we are buried with Christ; then we are also raised up with Christ to a new life; for this is the fruit of the death of Jesus, that we thereby are redeemed from the power of darkness, and are made worthy to become children, and to receive the Spirit of God, and this, man should be taught, that he, through faith, may receive, make a covenant with God, and become obedient unto him; not any longer living unto himself, but unto Him who died and arose from the dead for him; and this is the answer of a good conscience toward God, and this is what Christ teaches, when he commands to 'Teach them and baptize them.'

"Likewise with the Communion of the Lord's Supper, and the command, 'This do in remembrance of me,' by which we are to put ourselves in remembrance of the mercy, and the merits of Christ, with bread and wine, which represents the communion of believers; for as the bread, from many particles through the heat of fire, is made into one bread, so, also are the believers, by the power of the fire of the love of God (since they in a spiritual manner through faith partake of the true bread from heaven, which is Christ), made to

be members of the body of Christ. These may then, with understanding hearts and minds of faith, thank God for his kindness and mercy which he accomplished for us through Jesus Christ, whereunto the apostle admonishes the believers, saying, 'Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, one body and one Spirit.' Here, however, a man should well examine himself before he approaches to eat of this bread and to drink of this cup, and see whether he loves God or the world, for he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh to himself damnation. But open sinners who lead a carnal life, whereby, as Christ teaches, the heart becomes corrupted, and as Paul testifies of such as do the works of the flesh, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, such shall be expelled from the communion of the church.

"For this purpose the ban is given of Christ in the gospel, because a severe condemnation is pronounced against those who cause offense, and he commands to cut off offending members. Paul also says, 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' and commands, 'Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' And even as all the ordinances have a spiritual signification, so also the ban serves as a means to convince of sin, him, that through transgression, has departed from God, and that he should believe that it is the will of God that man should repent, mourn over his sins, and amend his life. For as sin separates from God, so true sorrow for sin is a power in the hands of God, by which man is again reconciled to God, and this is the object of the ban. Likewise it is with all the ordinances, also with feet-washing, which represents genuine humility, and to this he would direct us when he says, 'If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.' This humility is founded upon Christ, because by his power he has washed our souls, as he says to Peter, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' He did not, by this, abolish the outward washing of feet, but commanded it, and said, 'If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also

ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done unto you;' and this is therefore a commandment of Christ, as well as baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"We acknowledge, therefore, as above intimated, that all the ordinances lead to God from whence they came. Paul testifies to this and says, 'Behold Israel!' God commanded Israel that they should look to the pillar of cloud by day, and to the pillar of fire by night, and follow them, and they should be brought into the promised land. Since, however, unbelief was so great that they in unbelief murmured against God, and became unfaithful to him, they had to perish in the wilderness. So we see that in all times, unbelief as a power of Satan, and not the commandments of God, robbed men of the promises of God.

"Now we know to lay no other foundation except that is laid which is Jesus Christ, whereupon the whole ground of our faith rests, and not upon ordinances, although we acknowledge them as the commands of God. We hear a great deal said about the decline of the church, and we are greatly slandered on account of the ordinances, as though we endeavored to satisfy the people with ordinances. Which, however, is entirely without foundation. It is very true that the decline in the church is great, and that iniquity, according to Christ's own teaching, abounds, and the love of many waxes cold, but truth remaineth truth notwithstanding. And disorder will not abolish order, neither will unbelief abolish faith, and as we see the injury sustained by the church, we should be all the more zealous in helping each other to reprove sin. But this is one of the complaints, besides others, that we have against him (Boehm), that too many things are passed over, and we believe it would be better for all if we were more active in the exercise of brotherly reproof, and to show the erring the error of their ways, and to expel those who do things worthy of expulsion. In this manner we might hope to be able to accomplish more, and obtain God's blessing

in a larger measure. But in nearly every thing he has his own particular way, and it is impossible for us with him to preserve the established order in the church, for all the above given points, besides many others, have frequently been contradicted to him; but it is plainly to be seen that he and those with him have attained to that degree of wisdom that it seems to them folly for any one to oppose their views, and, according to their judgment, all that is brought against them is either a want of charity or foolishness.

"Therefore it came to pass that at a certain Conference of ministers and deacons, much conversation was had with him upon these subjects, for the purpose of convincing him that he erred, and that these things could not stand before God, but it was labor in vain. Finally he was advised by the counsel of the ministers that he should acknowledge and recall, with true sorrow and repentance, all that was held as erroneous in him, whether by word or deed, and should unite as one with us, that in preserving the established order of the church we might work together. But he refused to do so. He said he could not, but if it could be shown him that he had done wrong, he would recall; and he brought severe charges against a number of the ministers and deacons, but did not manifest so much charity that he inquired whether it was truth or not, or to point those who had told him, to the rules and order of the church, but rather sought to spread it abroad in opposition to the doctrines of Christ which teaches us, first, to find out (the truth), and then to reprove. After some time, two brethren were again sent to him to inquire of him whether he would receive the reproof and make his acknowledgment. He again refused, as at first, and manifested his penitence by slander and abuse against the ministers and deacons, and on account of the manner in which they dealt with him, he called them vain and light-minded men.

"We herewith inform the entire brotherhood that these were the chief reasons of difference between us as above given, and may here be briefly repeated.

1. "Because he had too much intercourse and fellowship with men (professors) who admit and allow war, and the swearing of oaths; and because these are directly opposed to the teachings of Christ, we believe that it is good for us to do as Christ teaches us, that is, 'Take heed that no man deceive you,' for, 'By their fruits' says he, 'ye shall know them;' and as the apostle advises, that we should separate ourselves, and come out from among them, and be a witness against them; and as Christ teaches, 'I testify of the world that their works are evil;' and that we teach to observe all things whatsoever he commanded us.

2. "In this that he says, that Satan is a benefit to mankind, we acknowledge that it is a falsehood; for Christ said to Peter, when he advised him to spare himself when he speaks of his suffering, 'Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me.' Now if the advice of Satan to Christ, when he sought to hinder him in fulfilling his Father's will, was offensive to Christ, we may well say, 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' For he is our adversary seeking whom he may devour.

3. "And in regard to what he said, That we might burn the Scriptures, and also by some of those who were with him, that what is in the Bible is not the word of God, we have already said that paper and ink may be burned. But as Christ declares that the 'Scripture cannot be broken,' it is self-evident also that they cannot be burned. Paul says, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine;' and further, Christ teaches that, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away; and again, Jesus says concerning the word, 'Thy word is truth,' and 'the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should do, and I know that his command is life everlasting.' Now if the Father's command, which Christ speaketh, is in the gospel, then it also contains the word of God, which Isaiah says, 'remaineth forever,' and of which Peter says, that 'holy

men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

4. "In regard to the expressions, 'That faith cometh from unbelief, life out of death, and light out of darkness;' we need only consider the origin of each, namely of faith, life and light, or from whence unbelief, death and darkness come, and we may easily decide that they can have no communion one with another; and concerning the ordinances, that in the manner in which the world, in unbelief practices them, they lead more to the devil than to God, we confess that all things that come from God are good, and not injurious to the souls of men; neither will they lead any one to Satan, for unbelief is Satan's power.

"Thus the matter stands between us, and such are the expressions used by Boehm and his followers, and we believe as we have confessed; we believe it is safer to believe the Holy Scriptures and the word of God than the words of men; and since we believe that Boehm and his followers, who acknowledge such doctrines as he does, are in error, we can not otherwise than in love advise them to return and believe, and acknowledge that such a course is wrong. Should we, however, be in error, and should we be convinced thereof by the Word, we will willingly turn away from our errors, acknowledge our faults and recall them. But if we cannot be convinced by the Word, that we are in error, we believe that it is their duty to acknowledge their error.

"If they, however, refuse, and think they know better than we, we will let the matter rest with them and with God. We will not set up ourselves as judges, but only as witnesses against it, leaving judgment entirely in the hands of God, for we do not desire a schism, and do not wish to be the cause of one, but hope to remain standing upon the foundation that has been laid long ago, 'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;' and the old confession of the brethren in the faith, adopted so many years ago, which we acknowledge that it is founded upon the gospel; and we will seek, by the help and grace of God,

according to the measure of understanding given us, to direct and govern the church in accordance with the confession therein contained, to which we sincerely wish the grace and blessing of God, that the Lord through grace by Jesus Christ may add his blessing thereto."

In an additional page accompanying the old manuscript from which the foregoing statement was taken, it is further said, that on account of the foregoing points of difference, the church could no longer retain Boehm and his followers who had been members of the church, as brethren, and that they should be excluded from the communion and the counsel of the brotherhood, until in true sorrow and penitence they should return and acknowledge their errors both to God and to the church.

The reader will observe that the foregoing statement of the doctrines, teachings and practices of the church, in connection with their dealings with a disobedient member or minister, afford us a very excellent testimony of the fact that the ministers and bishops of that day, were men who fully comprehended the responsibility of the important charge with which they were intrusted. That they watched over the flock of God, with fatherly care and took cognizance, not only of the unallowable conduct of the members, but also of the doctrine they taught, and this was right; we should guard the doctrines and the teachings of our church with zealous care. When we carefully examine the doctrines and teachings which are here set forth, we will find them in exact accordance with the word of God, and when we consider again that the foregoing manuscript contains the views and sentiments of the Conference of the ministers and deacons of Lancaster County, and thus reflects the doctrines, teachings and practices of the entire church, as a body, we at once see how widely, the view, which we here obtain, differs from that given by D. Musser. If these representations of the church had been written in a different locality, and by men of a different church, and describing a different people, we might suppose

that in the two churches set forth, a different state of affairs might have existed, but Musser's writings describe the same people, the same church, the same ministers and bishops, who produced the foregoing statement, who held and taught the doctrines set forth therein, and who manifested such a zeal for the truth and gospel order in the church.

But it may be said that this difference may be reconciled by the fact that Musser's representations, may cover a later period of time, and that the church may have deteriorated and become corrupt. But in answer to this, we remark that this manuscript was written, without doubt, about the year 1775, as shown above, and Musser says that long before the close of the eighteenth century, the church "had very widely departed from the faith and practice of Menno and his brethren." In the year 1800 he positively declares the Old Mennonite Church *dead*, and in 1811–12 the Reformed Church, under John Herr, was organized. Now if the church in 1800 and later was a dead church, and long before 1800 "had very widely departed from the faith and practice of Menno and his brethren," she must have been already dead, or at least in a dying condition, when Boehm for disobedience and false doctrine was expelled, and Burkholder wrote his article on "Repentance" in 1792, as will appear hereafter. But the foregoing testimonies already plainly show a different state of things. Let the kind reader reflect, compare these facts, and decide for himself.

In addition to the foregoing, we have another manuscript by a minister in another part of the State, but who lived and labored at the same time in which the foregoing was written, and bears testimony to the same unchangeable gospel truths contained in all the writings of our ministers of that period, which we have had the opportunity to examine. It is a remarkable fact which the careful reader will not fail to notice, that all our older ministers, each one according to the gift which he possessed, taught the same doctrine. Though they have written on different subjects and at different times,

the same fundamental truths, the same views and sentiments underlie and pervade all of them.

What a beautiful illustration we have here of the instructions of the apostle when he admonishes his brethren in his Corinthian letter, that they should "all speak the same thing," and this, in itself, is an additional evidence that they were really ministers of the true church of Christ. Had they not been moved by the Spirit of Christ, they would hardly have manifested such oneness of doctrine throughout all their teachings and writings, neither would they have been so careful to guard against false doctrine as we have seen that they were, from the foregoing manuscript.

The Author of the manuscript from which the following extract is taken, is not definitely known, but we have evidence sufficient to determine that it was written either by Christian Funk or Christian Holdeman, both of whom were ministers, and we think, bishops, in the Mennonite church. Christian Holdeman lived in Upper Salford Township, Montgomery Co., Pa., and Christian Funk in Chester Co., where he died in the preacher's desk in the church. The manuscript bears date March 31st, 1782, and gives an account, chiefly of the historical events of the Old Testament from Adam to David, and then after referring to the way of salvation as taught by our Savior, and the institution of the gospel dispensation, he says, "True Christians seek to walk in the ways and follow the footsteps of Jesus which are, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, compassion ; patient in suffering, not seeking to avenge themselves, not proud, but lowly, humble; not avaricious, not seeking honor or high places or offices in the world, but rather seek after God; and yield themselves willingly under the banner of the cross of Christ. They give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's They do not exalt themselves against the word of God, but bear all with meekness and patience. The children of this world (or anti-Christ) are not thus minded, but seek to avenge themselves, are given to

anger, hatred, disobedient to the word of God, curse and swear, rob and steal from their fellow men that which belongs to them (their fellow men), form themselves into sects and persecute and oppress those who are under their power. &c., &c.

CHAPTER V.

TESTIMONIES FROM THE WRITINGS OF CHRISTIAN BURKHOLDER ON REPENTANCE, REFLECTIONS, &C.

We shall now proceed to show that the doctrines and practices of the church towards the close of the last, and the early part of the present century, harmonized with and were the same as those taught and practiced in the earlier portions of the last century.

One of the principle accusations brought by Musser against the Old Mennonite Church, as the reader will have observed above, is, that the Mennonite church was *a dead church; that repentance was neither understood nor taught*, and that both ministers and people were unconverted, unregenerated and carnal professors. From the writings of Henry Funk we have seen, that in his time, this could not have been the case, and according to all the testimonies we have (and our testimony is quite full and very positive and clear), we must, if we would judge impartially, conclude, that there was but very little change in the spiritual condition of the church from the time in which Henry Funk lived, to the close of the eighteenth century. And now, to confirm the above assertion, and to give further proof of the condition of the church, in the time, in which both Musser and Herr bring their accusations against her, we here present to the reader an address on this very subject, viz: "Repentance," written during the latter part of the eighteenth century, that is, previous to 1792, by Christian Burkholder, one of the ministers of this so-called dead church, residing in the very neighborhood

where this undesirable condition of things is said to have existed.

Christian Burkholder was a minister of the Mennonite church, residing in the vicinity of New Holland, Lancaster Co., Pa., and wrote a small book in which we find articles or addresses to the young or rising generation on the following subjects: "True Repentance," "Pure love to God and our neighbor," "Obedience to the word of God and a full surrender of the soul into his hands," &c. These articles were written with and by the consent of the church The preface to these articles is dated Feb. 21st, 1792, and were first published in 1804, and in the same year reprinted at Ephrata, and again in 1829. They were finally added to our confession of faith, and have at this day a wide circulation. The fact that these were written by, and with the consent of the church, and that two editions were required in the same year to supply the demand, shows that the church believed and accepted the doctrine taught therein, and that there was a desire for just such teachings as these instructions contain, which would not have been the case if the church was a dead and unconverted church. Let us now examine his views on the doctrine of Repentance.

"Repentance is the first command of Christ, as is to be seen Matt. 4 : 17. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' But this is not merely his first command—his first command to his disciples—but also his last, as is to be seen in Luke 24: 46, 47; where he opened unto them the Scriptures, and said: 'Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name,' &c. This command the apostles were to proclaim to all men, 'And now he commandeth all men every where to repent.' Acts 17 : 30.

"Thus it is indisputable that all men need repentance, as they have all sinned, are children of wrath, and by nature carnally and earthly minded. Yea, in this state our hearts are a desert, overgrown with thistles and thorns; and into

this desert comes the voice of the preacher: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' Luke 3: 4. This is the voice of true repentance—the voice once addressed to Adam, when the Lord said: 'Where art thou?' Whereupon the soul answers: 'I hear thy voice, and am afraid, because I am naked.'

"Thus man is brought to a proper sense of himself, by the quickening power of the word of God, so that he learns to know himself with all his inherent defects. Yea, hereby he is brought to 'acknowledge his transgressions, and his sins are ever before him.' Psalm 51: 3. Yea, to one who is penitent, every thing becomes a burden, and every thing sinful a great sin. 'He is bowed down greatly; and goes mourning all the day long.' Psalm 38: 6.

"Greatly afflicted and troubled is a penitent soul, if she somewhat delights in the pleasures of youth, and then retires to solitude. This becomes, as it were, a hell to her conscience, and she is ready to cry out: 'O what have I done! O wretched man that I am!' Thus looking upon the tree of nature as one that bringeth forth no good fruit; as one concerning which the preacher of repentance says: 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Luke 13: 7. 'Every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Luke 3: 9.

"Man carnally minded, or in a state of nature, is compared to the 'vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah;' whose 'grapes are of gall,' and whose 'clusters are bitter;' whose wine is the 'poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.' Deut. 32: 32, 33.

"The Lord, in alluding to the disobedience and wickedness of the children of Israel (Deut. 32: 23), says: 'I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.' Thus speaks and feels a person who has come to a knowledge of his sins; his heart is tender as melted wax; he is penitent; he is heartily sorry, that so much evil cleaves unto him; for when he wants to do 'good, evil is present with

him.' But his being in possession of this knowledge, is not yet sufficient. For John the Baptist says: 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.' Matt. 3 : 8.

"The fruit of true repentance grows in a change of heart, for the heart of man by nature, is proud and conceited; but the heart of a penitent is humble and contrite; and as the heart is, so is the fruit thereof. It moreover 'sets its affections on things above, and not on things beneath.' Col. 3 : 2. In short, it imitates the virtues of our Savior while on earth, who himself declared that he was 'meek and lowly in heart.' Matt. 11: 29. And here it may be remarked, that a person who is 'meek and lowly in heart, cannot bring forth fruit that has externally the appearance of pride, whether it be in words, actions, or the 'putting on of apparel.' 1 Pet. 3: 3. 'For in pride is destruction and much trouble.' Tobit. 4: 13. But when further the heart is filled with the meekness of Christ, it bespeaks a good tree (Matt. 12 : 33), while on the other hand, evil fruit grows out of evil seed which the enemy has sown into the human heart by means of the senses and thoughts; whereby much evil fruit has been brought forth; particularly in reference to the lusts of incontinence, with which poor man is, as it were, intoxicated.

"True repentance is further very necessary; yea, 'fruits meet forrepentance;' whereby an entire change for the better takes place—whereby we come to a pious and virtuous course of life; so that we do no more that which we were wont to do in our former sinful course of life. The grace and power, however, of leaving off a wicked course of life, and leading a pious life, as just stated, must be obtained of the Lord, through earnest prayer day and night. Good resolutions alone are not sufficient for this purpose; for it is the 'goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance.' Rom. 2: 4.

"We have moreover to take care, that we do not 'after our hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' For in true repentance we are sub-

ject to great temptations, as the enemy assails us in many different ways. At times it appears to us, that at no time more sinful and adverse things have come into our way, than just now that we are resolved to amend our lives. We are ridiculed by the world; of others we see bad examples. Again the enemy tempts us with self-exaltation, trying to persuade us that we have had much experience—much more than we really have had; that we are far advanced in the divine life, &c. In short, he tempts us in every way. But the weapons of our 'warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' 2 Cor. 10 : 4, 5. For he who yields obedience to Christ, endeavors to 'keep his word.' Luke 11 : 28.

"A person who labors under temptation, does well if he diligently takes heed to the word of God, as 'unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in his heart.' 2 Pet. 1: 19. For the Lord says: 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' Rev. 3 : 10.

"The whole work of regeneration, or the new birth, grounds itself on true repentance ; and penitent souls 'love one another with a pure heart fervently. being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.' 1 Pet. 1: 22, 23.

"To a penitent the word of God becomes life and light in the soul. He who listens to it, becomes thereby changed in heart—converted; namely, from pride to humility; from incontinence to chastity; from hatred to love; from covetousness to liberality; from the habit of lying and cheating to truth and honesty. Yea, he is thus transformed from darkness into light; rescued from the power of Satan, and converted to God. This, dear reader, is what is produced by 'fruits meet for repentance.' "

In his address on Saving Faith, on page 193, the same

author says: "God is an invisible mighty Being, and speaks through his Holy Spirit, to many a soul in secret, in order to reprove it, and convince it of sin and the depravity of its nature, and after repentance again to comfort it. Yea, this is the case even with such souls as have not the Scriptures, or cannot read them. But the convictions of such souls agree with the doctrines of the Son of God and that of his apostles; for the teachings of the Spirit of God agree with these doctrines. Therefore Scripture is not to be set aside, for it is with it as with natural food: this appears before our eyes to be dead, and yet there is a power in it, whereby our natural life is preserved. If we however do not relish such food, it follows that we are not in health. And so it is with the word of God. If we do not enjoy its precious contents, it follows that we are yet in a state of spiritual disease, if not dead—dead in sin.

"Another means of becoming strengthened in faith is earnest prayer to God. Of this means the disciples of our Lord made use in their weakness. They went to Jesus and prayed: 'Lord increase our faith.' Luke 17 : 5. So the father of the child which had a dumb spirit cried out, and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' Mark 9 : 24. So again the disciples, to whom we just alluded, although they at all times believed and acknowledged, that Christ was the Son of the living God, yet were they sometimes, in times of necessity, of 'small faith.'" In the foregoing passages, the writer would show how needful it is that we, too, should exercise ourselves in prayer that we may be strong in faith. He says further: "But how weak are we in faith in our time! Yea, I fear that our faith is in many respects too weak—that if we were put to the test, it would be found wanting."

"The Savior says: 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' Luke 18 : 8. Indeed every body believes and confesses, that there is an invisible Divine Power, which created every thing, and preserves every thing, and

that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, &c. But what does it help us if we embrace and adhere to such confession of faith, and yet lead a heathenish course of life, in all kinds of sin and wickedness? 'What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?' James 2 : 14.

"True faith leads us into a state of self-denial—a state in which we follow Christ, as did his faithful followers in the time of his incarnation. Yea, here a faith is required that 'worketh by love;' a faith whereby we become 'justified,' and obtain 'peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Rom. 4 : 1, 2. Yea, a faith which has for its foundation the word of God; which 'word' the apostle says, 'is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach.'" Rom. 10 : 8.

"Through faith we obtain the pardon of our sins, and salvation through the blood of Christ." "A person who has received a new heart, also speaks with a new tongue." "An impenitent heart is a breeding nest of this poison and seed of serpents; which may however be expelled by faith and repentance. Flee therefore from sin, as you would flee from a serpent. For it is a deadly draught to the soul; which may occasion its disease, if not death." "But Christ is the proper destroyer of serpents. * * * Through faith in him and his word, the serpents, with their tricks and wiles, are expelled from the heart; and when the hands of faith are laid upon the sin-sick soul, it will recover."

"Now my dear young hearts, if the word of God binds us so closely, to love him as our Creator, 'with all our heart, and with all our strength,' there remains nothing of our heart wherewith to love the vanities and pleasures of this world; such as the 'lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' for 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' 1 John 1 : 15. Therefore let every one well distinguish whether he is actuated by

the love of God or by the impure love and lusts of nature."

"He who lives in 'envy, hatred, wrath, and strife,' generally lives in a state of self-righteousness,—thinking that he has a right to speak and act as he does, and this false righteousness keeps him in his sinful course of life. For did he believe in regard to himself, that his conduct was 'earthly, sensual, and devilish,' it is impossible that he could live on from year to year in 'wrath and strife.' For the apostle also says: 'They which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'" Gal. 5 : 21.

We feel that our extracts from this work have been ample to give the reader a good idea of the teachings of this author, and any one who is not fully satisfied from these extracts, will find it of advantage to read it in full in the "Conversation of Saving Faith." He further admonishes against hatred, uncharitableness towards brethren and neighbors; against falsehood, ridicule, slanderous and vain conversation, vain and idle company; against all evil desires and fleshly lusts, dissensions in the church; against seeking revenge, in any manner, of those who in any wise have injured us; in short, we believe that in his several addresses, he covered the whole ground of Christian doctrine and practice, and any one following the teachings which he gives, and avoiding the sins and snares which he points out and warns us against, will be a true Christian and an heir of heaven.

Now these teachings, doctrines and instructions were written and published with and by the consent of the churches, and were acknowledged and accepted by the signatures of twenty-seven ministers and deacons in the name of the whole church, which shows very conclusively that the church accepted, esteemed and maintained the genuine doctrine and practice of the Gospel. Let the kind reader consider, and judge with an unbiased mind, whether, in view of these things, the accusations of Musser show any plausibility of truth.

CHAPTER VI.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF PETER BURKHOLDER AND ABRAHAM GODSHALK, WITH REMARKS.

We will here present the reader with a number of extracts from the writings of Peter Burkholder, of Rockingham County, Virginia. He was born in Pennsylvania, on the 27th of August, 1783, and while yet quite young, his father, with his family, removed to Virginia. Here Peter spent the rest of his days. He was ordained to the ministry in 1805, being then only twenty-two years of age. He afterwards became a bishop, in which capacity he served the church a good many years, though our informant is not able to give the exact time in which he was ordained to the bishop's office. He was beloved and respected as a God-fearing and pious Christian, both by his own people and others. He preached only in the German language, and persons who did not understand that language, and consequently had no benefit of what he said, came to hear him preach and sat, attentively listening to his discourses. They said, they knew he was a Christian by his deportment. English people were very desirous to hear him speak in their language, and often requested him to do so, but his knowledge of that language was so limited that he would not consent to do so. A brother, still living, who knew him well, lived a close neighbor to him, and had constant dealings with him, bears testimony that in his business transactions he invariably found him manifesting a disposition rather to give than to take. "In his ministry," says this brother, "he was decidedly the ablest

man I ever heard." He preached lengthy sermons with tears trickling down over his cheeks, and invariably manifested such zeal and power as to melt his audience to tears. He preached what he believed to be Gospel truths, and never varied therefrom to suit those with itching ears, or who, like so many in our day, desired continually to hear something new.

He wrote a number of "Reflections" on portions of the Sermon on the Mount and other parts of Scripture, which were translated by Joseph Funk, and with the Confession of Faith (also translated by him), published at Winchester, Virginia, in 1837. These "Reflections" by Peter Burkholder, like the writings of Christian Burkholder, of Lancaster County, Pa., illustrate and set forth the doctrines, faith, and practice of the church, in a very able and practical manner, and we find in them some very excellent and pointed remarks on repentance, conversion and the new birth. He indeed devotes one entire chapter of his writings to the subject of regeneration, basing his remarks on John 3 : 3—6, and his writings throughout are strictly scriptural and fully harmonize with the confessions of our church and other Mennonite writers. It will also be observed that as he was ordained to the ministry in 1805, his labors extended through that period of time in which the "Reformed Church" had its origin, and in which Herr and Musser lay their severest charges at her door. We will let the reader himself judge of the character, both of the man and of his teachings from the following extracts from his writings.

In the first of his Reflections, on page 266, where he speaks of the *Poor in Spirit*, Matt. 5 : 3, he says, "Here our great Teacher instructs us in the ways of blessedness, and tells us clearly that it is necessary for us that we should be poor in Spirit. Now let us examine and see what is meant by being poor in Spirit, and in what it consists. It consists principally in a true self-knowledge. The person who is acquainted with his own heart, is of a humble, lowly spirit; for if we examine

ourselves we will find that of ourselves we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing, but that all we are, and all we have is of God. From him we derive our being, the faculties of the soul, every good thought, and it is he that 'worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Phil. 2 : 13. For God is all in all ; the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for he is rich unto all that call upon him, and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, every humble discerning penitent will acknowledge that God is rich, strong and powerful, but he poor, weak and impotent ; and in this self-abasement will humbly bow before the throne of his majesty and confess that he has nothing to boast of but his infirmity ; and thus renouncing all self-righteousness, will groan and say with the apostle Paul, 'For I know that in me (that is in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good, I find not.' 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?' Rom. 7 : 18, 24. Such an one will feel himself to be unclean and leprous, like the lepers in Israel of old.—But how consolatory to him to find that when the leprosy had covered all the skin of him that had the plague, from his head even to his foot, and had all turned white, the priest was then to pronounce him clean. Lev. 13 : 12, 13. So, in like manner, when the truly penitent mourner, groaning under a sense and load of corruption, sin, and uncleanness, deeply humbled and poor in spirit, cometh to Jesus, the Great High Priest, he has the promise of being pronounced clean. But he must come to Christ, burdened and sin-sick ; with a sincere desire beseeching Him, to cleanse and purify him from all sin and uncleanness, as did the ten lepers of Israel, who lifted up their voices, and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go, show yourselves unto the priests : and it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.' Luke 17 : 13, 14. In such a manner will all those do who are poor in spirit ; who feel the weight of their corruptions, sins and

infirmities. Sin-sick and mourning they will come to Jesus, their Great High Priest, beseeching him to cleanse and heal them from all their sins and maladies. And for such is he a Physician, and a Redeemer, as he saith: 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Such poor in spirit he calls to him and saith, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"The true penitent, experiencing that he is poor in spirit, that he is altogether sinful, fallen, degraded, in a lost state by nature, and unable to flee from the wrath to come, and to deliver himself, he begins to mourn over his sinful state, with godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. With a broken heart and a tender conscience, he humbleth himself and says with penitent David, 'I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.' Ps. 38 : 6. In this mourning over sin, the sinner will feel his sins to become an intolerable burden to him; altogether too heavy for him to bear; and thus he will strive to have them blotted out, in looking unto the Savior of sinners, by true repentance and by faith. For, as long as the sinner is yet willing to live in sin, after the lust of the flesh and the rudiments of the world, he is not come to a repentance acceptable with God. For, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever,' 1 John 2 : 15, 16, 17. Therefore, sin, and the lust of the world, must become intolerably loathsome to every true penitent, and a burden too heavy for him to bear, so, that he can say with the apostle Paul, 'The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world! Gal. 6 : 14. To such an humble, sin-burdened, sin-sick soul, the words of Christ will be sweet, when he says: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

"From the foregoing it is clear and evident, that mourning and godly sorrow must go before peace, comfort, and consolation; of which we find many examples in the Scriptures. Especially that of the woman, who was a sinner, and came to Jesus when he sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, bringing an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Luke 7 : 38. This is quite a different representation of a truly penitent sinner, from what we see in our day, in many of those who pretend to be converted, and yet go forth in all the pomp and conformity to the world, decorating their heads according to all the vain and fleeting fashions. This was not the case with the woman under consideration, who used the hairs of her head for a towel, to wipe the feet of her beloved Lord and Master, whom she loved and adored above all things; inasmuch as she thought herself unworthy to appear before him, but stood behind, in humility and self abasement, but yet in a firm faith and hope of obtaining from him mercy, grace, and forgiveness of her many sins. And this she obtianed when Jesus said unto her, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.' Here were fulfilled the words of the Lord, 'Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.'

"Here we see, how merciful, kind, and condescending our Lord is, to those poor sinners who come to him distressed and mourning over their sins. But, let us beware and not err in comforting ourselves with a vain comfort, before we have been deeply humbled for sin, by feeling the evil of it, and our lost state by nature; which, it is to be feared, is the case with too many, who pretend to shout and exult over their sins, ere they have been brought to see the sinfulness of their own hearts and the evil of sin, and thus become deeply humbled and go into godly mourning. Such exultation and shouting is not pleasing to the Lord. For,

when Israel of old went out against the Philistines to battle, and were smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men,—the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts which dwelleth between the Cherubims, to save them from the hands of their enemies. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, 'Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.' 1 Sam. 4 : 1—7. But all this great shouting helped them nothing: and the Lord was not pleased with it, neither did he hear them, notwithstanding their expressions of joy and exultation, and their idle notion that all was now well with them since they had the ark of the covenant of the Lord with them in the camp. The Philistines also feared that it was so. But the event proved it to be quite otherwise. For when they again went out against the Philistines to battle, and the Philistines fought, Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent; and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were slain.—Now is the question, Why did the Lord not hear Israel in their great shouting when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp? When their shouting was even so great that the earth rang again?—The answer is, because they mourned not over the sins which they had committed, and many things which they had among them with which the Lord was displeased. This is clearly seen in the sequel. For, when they presumptuously looked into the ark, at Beth-shemesh, the Lord smote of the people fifty thousand and three

score and ten men. This brought them to a state of mourning, and to a knowledge of the evil of sin; for the men of Beth-shemesh said, 'Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God?'—After this, the ark of the Lord was taken up to Kirjath-jearim, and while it was there the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. This was the beginning of that mourning and godly sorrow which is acceptable to the Lord. And when Samuel saw this their lamentation, he spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. And they were gathered together to Mizpeh, and fasted on that day, acknowledging their sins to the Lord. And Samuel offered a burnt-offering unto the Lord, and prayed for them, and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. 1 Sam. 7 : 1—10.

"Now, here we may clearly see, that all the shouting, rejoicing, and exultation of the children of Israel, helped them nothing, so long as their hearts were not deeply humbled by penitent mourning for their apostasy and sins, and by renouncing their idols, and those things which were an abomination in the sight of the Lord. But, if my readers should say, We have not Baalim and Ashtaroth among us, to worship them, and what have we that is so displeasing to the Lord, for which we should repent and mourn? I would answer, That, though we have no images or heathen deities that we worship among us now, yet, there are many other things which are of an idolatrous nature, and are equally displeasing and abominable in the sight of the Lord our God;

and which we must renounce and forsake if we would be his children. First, Christ our Lord saith, 'For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' Luke 16 : 15. Such abominations are to be found among men only too much : for the whole race of man is by nature inclined to be high-minded, and to pursue the vain modes and fashions of the world, and the conformity to it; notwithstanding the admonition of the apostle Paul, where he says, 'And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' Moreover, how prone is man to seek honor of men; and how vain glorious of renown? Whereas Christ saith, 'I receive not honor from men.' Also, How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God? John 5 : 41—44. Again, many hanker after riches, and labor to amass perishable treasures, and serve them by having their hearts fixed on this mammon, pretending also to serve God; whereas Christ saith, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Matt. 6 : 24. Therefore, if we would be truly converted to the Lord, we must abandon and forsake all these sins which the Lord abhors; seek his favor; devote our hearts wholly to his service; cleave and cling to him with reverence and love, and adore and serve him alone, in obeying his voice.

"When Saul was disobedient to the voice of the Lord, Samuel reproved him and said, 'Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.' 1 Sam. 15 : 22, 23. Here we see that disobedience to the voice of the Lord is a heinous sin; and if we would be acceptable to God, and be heard of him, we must put away from us the

sins of disobedience and rebellion, which are iniquity and idolatry, and be made pure and holy, ready and willing to do whatsoever he has commanded us. For, 'Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.' 2 John 5 : 9. But so long as we have not renounced and forsaken those sins and abominations which the Lord abhors and has forbidden in his word, we may cry and call aloud, and yet not be heard of the Lord, as he saith by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah : 'And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.' Isa. 1 : 15. 'But,' saith Christ, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' John 15 : 7.

"Our Lord saith, in the 4th verse of the words under consideration, 'Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.' To be meek is to be of a soft, tender, gentle, quiet, humble, forbearing and submissive disposition, and not easily provoked. Of this disposition we must also participate if we would be prepared for the kingdom of God and for a share in the promised blessing. For, as long as our hearts are yet hard, obdurate and impenitent, there is no blessing promised us, but, much more, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil. For, by nature the heart of man is the seat of evil, corrupt and vile affections; it is hard, obdurate, presumptuous, self-willed and impenitent; by reason of which it is in a fatal and unhappy state. Therefore, the sinner's heart must be changed, renewed, softened, and broken with the hammer of the law of God's word, and thus brought to a knowledge of the evil of sin, and of the evil of his own heart; for, by the law is the knowledge of sin. Rom. 3 : 20. Now, when the sinner is brought to see the justice of the law, and feels himself under the condemnation of it, he will be afraid of the judgments of God, as it is written, 'My flesh trem-

bleth for fear of them: and I am afraid of thy judgments.' Ps. 119 : 120. Moreover, 'Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' Isa. 38 : 14. Thus, full of anguish and fear, the sinner is brought to see his sad case by nature, and now begins to seek for a remedy, by humbling himself under the mighty hand of God and beseeching Him to give him a new heart and a new spirit. And now, as the sinner is humbled and comes to the Lord in his appointed way, the Lord also confirms his promise to him, when he saith, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.' Ezek. 36 : 26. And such a heart as this will then be meek. It will be of a soft, tender, gentle, quiet, teachable and submissive disposition. And to all such as are of this disposition is promised that they shall inherit the earth; namely, the new earth, of which the apostle Peter saith, 'Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' 2 Pet. 3 : 13. 'But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.'" Ps. 37 : 11.

On page 288, in his Reflections on the *Pure in heart*, he says, after quoting several Scripture passages, "From these words it follows, that if we would serve God according to his will, we must purge and purify ourselves from all sin and uncleanness, and that justice and righteousness must be manifested and shown forth in our walk and conversation. For, should we daily attend on public worship, praying much and saying, Lord, Lord! and with all this not do the will of the Father which is in heaven, in keeping his commandments which he has commanded us to do, it would not be pleasing to the Lord: for, as our inner religion of the heart cannot subsist and stand the test except it be evidenced in our outward walk and conversation, and in using the appointed

means, so likewise cannot our outward good works stand the test and be acceptable to God if they are not wrought by faith of the inner man. For this reason it would be vain to say—If only the heart is good, it don't matter for externals; and on the other hand, it would be equally fruitless and pernicious to say—It is enough if I am baptized—go to hear the word of God preached, and partake of the Lord's Supper; if I do this I am a Christian, and what need I more? Of this order were the Pharisees, in having all their religion and divine service in outward ceremonies and tradition of the elders and the commandments of men, for which the Lord reproveth them when he saith, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' Matt. 15 : 8, 9."

Again on page 292 he writes as follows, "Here the sinner must be made willing, with all his heart, to forsake and renounce sin and all ungodliness, and with all his soul to submit to the divine moving and teaching of the Spirit of grace, and with humble prayer and supplication to God, seek to be purified in heart, and sanctified, as David saith, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.' Ps. 51 : 10, 11. And so soon as the supplicant is thus purified in heart, by being washed and cleansed from within, he will be clean from without also: and this cleanliness, or purity from without, consists in obediently keeping the commandments of God, as Peter saith, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.' 1 Pet. 1 : 22, 23. Here, by obeying the truth, (which is the word of God), they were purified and cleansed from without,

as Christ clearly shows when he saith, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' John 15 : 3. And with this obedience to the word of God, must all true Christians and children of God comply : Therefore did the Son of God pray so earnestly to his heavenly Father that He would sanctify his disciples saying, 'Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth.'" 17 : 7.

He says further in his Reflection on the *New Birth*, pages 387–8–9, "If any one thinketh that he is born again, and the spirit by whose influence he was regenerated, leadeth him not to the obedience of the Gospel, and to imitating and following Christ, in his regeneration, in all the commandments of Christ, he may be assured that he is deceived in his new birth and that he was not born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, for as the seed is, so will the fruit and the birth be. And when the seed of the word of God is sown into the heart of man, and is quickened by the co-operative influence of the Holy Spirit, it will become operative in the heart to subdue and mortify the deeds of the body and its sinful lusts, and crucify the old man." "'And ye now therefore have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' John 16 : 21, 22. This sorrow and anguish consists in mourning over sin, and crucifying the lusts of the flesh with its deeds, for Paul says, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Gal. 5 : 24. 'Moreover, mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.' Col. 3 : 5. 'Also, that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.' Eph. 4 : 22—24. * * * Therefore let every one who thinketh that he is born again of the Word and Spirit of God, prove and examine himself, whether he has crucified and

put to death his old Adamic nature ?—put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts ?—and whether he has put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ?—for where this is not found, there is no true regeneration—no new birth that is wrought by the word and Spirit of God, but is imaginary and fanciful, and will not be able to bear the test."

On pages 397–8–9, he further says, "From the foregoing words and remarks it is plain and evident, that by this spiritual birth, we participate of the spirit of Christ; and consequently partake of his holy nature, and are like minded with him. And from his own words we learn, that he is meek and lowly, as he saith, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Matt. 11 : 29. Now, as he, our Lord and Savior, is meek and lowly in heart,—all those who are born of his Spirit will be meek and lowly in heart too; and will manifest this humble, meek and lowly disposition, by taking his cross upon them, and following him in the regeneration, by leading a holy, harmless and pious life. For true regeneration, which is wrought by the Spirit of God, will manifest itself by self-denial, copying after and imitating Christ in a godly life, following after him, and thus continue till death: for the crown is not at the beginning; neither is it in the middle; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. 'Moreover, Christ Jesus has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' 1 Pet. 2 : 21, 23. And, according to this example, will the disciples of Christ be of a lamb-like disposition, and shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Pet. 2 : 9.

"And besides, the new birth which is effected by the Spirit of God, overcometh the world; as John saith, 'For

whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' 1 John 5 : 4. And those who have overcome the world, must not seek its honor and glory, its comforts and delights—neither live conformably to it, as the apostle saith, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.' 1 John 2 : 15—17. Now, this love of the world, with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, belongs to the natural birth: but the new-born, spiritual birth of God, by faith, overcometh the world. Hence, let every one who thinketh that he is born of God, prove himself and examine, whether he participates in the divine nature and disposition; and whether he is advancing in the Christian graces and virtues, and in heavenly-mindedness: and if he should find that he does not partake of this heavenly and divine nature and tendency, and has not put on this lamb-like disposition of being humble, meek, and lowly in mind, he may be assured that he is not born of God: which, it is to be feared, is the case with many, who vainly imagine that they are regenerated and born of God, and yet do not manifest, in their life and conversation, that humility and meekness which adorns the disciple of Christ, and his doctrine. But, on the contrary, they oppose the holy doctrine of Christ and his apostles, by a conformity to the world, in pride and haughtiness; using the laws of the world to oppress their neighbors, and the sword to avenge themselves, and to do violence to their enemies, all which is opposed to the divine nature, tendency and disposition of Christ Jesus, and belongs to worldly mindedness, and not to those who are heavenly minded, for 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.'" 1 John 2 : 6

We will now pass over to another writer, who lived, preached and wrote probably about the same time as Peter Burkholder. This writer is Abraham Godshalk, of the Deep Run Church, in Bucks Co., Pa. The English work from which our extracts are made was printed in 1838. The work is called "A description of the New Creature, from its birth until grown up into a perfect man ; unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, with its necessity, origin, growth, and final glorious and happy state through Jesus Christ." The work was first written and published in the German language, and it is very probable that at least, several years elapsed, between the first writing and the English publication. He wrote and published this work in his later years, and he, himself, says that he was, "at a pretty early day," that is, at a pretty early age, "called to be a preacher of the Gospel," so that he must also have lived, and preached, at least in the early part of his ministry, just in the very time, or at least soon after, in which the church is represented as so dead and impure. We will give only a few extracts from his writings which we deem sufficient, however, to give the key-note to the entire work.

On pages 32 and 33 he says, "I go on, Secondly, to show what regeneration is, and first, it is a change in man, as the terms of 'Regeneration,' 'New creature,' &c., sufficiently imply and show forth. Our Savior could hardly have made use of a more powerful and significant expression, or given a better type, than the birth of man. * * * Paul says, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,' notwithstanding it is not in the power of the bride to give the increase, but God gives it; therefore, regeneration is a change of such a nature, as not to be produced by man alone ; neither by the regenerated, nor by him who is to be regenerated, but by the co-operation of God with man, so that it may be said with propriety of the regenerated man, that he is born of God. There are many, I know, who think that all who will, may be regenerated, and so I think too;

but it is in the will that regeneration has its commencement; for if the wicked man only once has the will to receive Christ, or in other words, to cease from evil, and to learn to do good, has he not the most essential part, and is no more what he was before, but a new creature? Understand me rightly, he is new in will; and Paul shows most clearly, that it is God which worketh in man, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, though this may by some be considered small, it is nevertheless a commencement of regeneration, a birth out of God by faith, and when to the will is added the deed, we have regeneration in a good degree.

"Regeneration is putting on Christ by faith. And where Christ, who may with much propriety be called a new man (for there never was any like him on earth before), is to be put on, the old man must be put off, as Paul says (Eph. 4 : 32), 'That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness: wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.' To put on Christ, is not merely to believe that he is, but to receive him in all, as he is, namely: in doctrine, in examples and merits, as Paul says, 'As ye have learned him, so walk ye in him.' And if we put on Christ with his holy doctrine and example, repentance must be the consequence with the sinner for the first, and secondly a patterning after Jesus, which leads to sanctification of the flesh and of the spirit; and if we then also put him on with his merits, then are we begotten again to a lively hope of life everlasting, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

"Now he that has truly put on Christ, cannot otherwise than love God and his brother; for this Christ repeatedly taught, namely, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.' Again, 'Thereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' And here-

with John agrees, saying, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' 1 Jn. 4 : 7. Again, 'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments, for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' 1 Jn. 5 : 2, 3. And when man has once such a love to God, by virtue of which he keeps his commandments, then he is indeed a *new creature.* 'Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new.' 2 Cor. 5 : 17. Yea, man is changed in will, understanding, and deeds: yea, in heart. So then we see that regeneration consists in light from God, faith, a change of the will, a change of the passions and propensities: where the blind *are made* to see, or the ignorance of the will of God must depart. And faith grounds itself on knowledge that gave evidence, being convinced, whereby the perverse will become right, so that man only wills, what God wills, and the passions are so altered that we love that which before we loved not, and hate, or at least, deny ourselves of what we before loved, that is to say all things forbidden of God. I have now given a brief description of regeneration, in so far as it is necessary unto a complete entrance into the kingdom of Christ on earth; it being righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

We have now in the foregoing pages, presented the reader with extracts and articles from the writings of different men, to show the teachings, and represent the condition of the church from 1760 or before, to 1830 or 1840, or from the time in which our accusers admit and claim that the church was, at least, reasonably pure, and in which it began to become corrupt, and covering the period in which they claim that it was a dead church, and in which its corruption was greatest, for Musser also makes the assertion, that since the Reformed Mennonite Church was organized, the Old Mennonite Church, has, to some extent reformed, and that in many respects her members live a much more moral life, than during the period, as he claims, of her greatest corruption.

The reader will remember that Henry Funk came to this country in 1719, and that he died in 1760, so that he represents in his writings the doctrines and teachings of the church during that period. The old manuscript, given in a previous chapter, which gives an account of the dealings of the church with Boehm, was evidently written in, or about the year 1775. The extract from another manuscript given in the same chapter, bears date of 1782, and Christian Burkholder wrote his essays or admonitions on Repentance, &c., about the year 1792, or just previous to it, while the writings of Peter Burkholder and Abraham Godshalk were published in the English language in 1837 and 1838, both having been written previously in the German, and those of Godshalk were also previously published in that language.

The testimonies presented in these writings, it seems to us, should be conclusive to every reflecting and unprejudiced mind. If the church taught the true doctrine of the Gospel, in the days of Henry Funk, as his writings so plainly show; if the Conference composed of the entire body of ministers and deacons, with the consent and acquiescence of the membership of the church in, or about 1775, leave us a testimony, reflecting the true doctrines of the Gospel and a faithful adherence to the same, and showing that they not only professed, but also lived in accordance with their faith, and if Christian Burkholder wrote and advocated the true gospel doctrine of repentance, in 1792, to which the church still at this day adheres, which things neither Musser nor any one else can deny, then it is not at all probable, yea, we may say, impossible, that the church in a few years should have become so entirely corrupt, that it must be branded as a dead church. Even if the testimony given us in the old manuscript above referred to, and the writings of Christian Burkholder and others, should fail us, it would be an unheard of thing for a church as the Mennonite church, is acknowledged, even by Musser himself, to have been, that with a doctrine so pure, a faith so strong, and an adherence so firm, that neither the

wiles of Satan, nor the fires of persecution could extinguish her devotion during all the centuries of her sufferings, the Mennonite church, should have, in so short a time, lost her candlestick and have become a dead church. Besides this, the writings of Peter Burkholder and Abraham Godshalk leave us an indisputable testimony, that the same Gospel doctrines were taught, and earnestly taught, during this very time and also afterwards, while many witnesses, still living, can be produced who confirm the correctness of our remarks, and the injustice of Musser's charges.

It requires time to corrupt a church that is truly a church of God, as well as to reform a corrupt people and bring them back to God. We seldom, if ever, find an individual person, who plunges suddenly from a pure, innocent, Christian life, into the depths of sin, debauchery and crime. The most notorious criminals always begin their course by little transgressions; the taking of little things makes, at last, the highway robber; the wantonly killing of harmless insects and animals, often leads a man, step by step, to bloodshed and murder; the drinking of the daily dram or the morning and evening bitters, creates, gradually, a desire for more, until step by step, the man becomes a confirmed drunkard. Hence the idea that the Mennonite church, standing as we have seen, upon the genuine doctrines of the word of God in 1760, should, in the course of forty years or even less, become so entirely corrupt, as our defamers would have it, is to say the least, not at all probable.

Jesus says, "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God also gives us the promise that he will never leave nor forsake his people. Now if the church was so corrupt in 1800 as is represented, then the transition from a pure and glorious church to a corrupt one, must have been exceedingly rapid. In much less than fifty years every vestige of her glory must have perished, and her candlestick taken away. Every minister, who had once raised his voice for

the pure doctrine of the Gospel, must have been silenced or corrupted, and every true believer must have been departed from the true faith and taken to the refuge of lies and false doctrine.

But of such a sudden transformation, or such a rapid, retrograde movement, as would have been required for the entire church to come down from that exalted position in which our friend Musser holds her, while she was in her glory, to the depths in which he would have her at the beginning of the present century, we find no record beyond that of Musser and his friends, and to what credit that is entitled to, we have already shown. Neither would we find the men of such spiritual power and pure teaching immediately after the beginning of the present century, if their immediate predecessors had been so corrupt and dead. For out of such a dead church it would be impossible to bring forth men of such vigorous, spiritual strength, such living faith, without a general awakening and reformation. But we have no account, whether written or traditional, of any sudden, powerful and wide-spread awakening or reformation taking place during that time.

The foregoing testimonies are sufficient for our present purpose, namely, to show what the church taught, what kind of a spirit was manifested by the leaders, teachers and prominent men of the church, who lived and labored during the time referred to. In the next chapter we will give letters written during that time, and testimonials from men who are still living, but whose memories go back to that very period, and bring down to us the spiritual condition of the church in that day, and which give us, perhaps more of the practical life of the church than what has already been presented.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS FROM HENRY HUNSICKER, CHRISTIAN NISSLEY, JACOB HOSTETTER, AND HENRY KOLB.

We will now proceed to give as corroboratory evidence to that already given, and as bringing the account of the condition of the church nearer to our own time, the following letters and extracts of letters, interspersed with such explanations and remarks as may seem necessary. These letters passed between the parties in the form of a friendly correspondence, in which men are not expected to confine themselves strictly to religious topics, and if these men, most of whom were ministers, were the light-minded, frivolous, carnal and worldly people, that Musser claims they were, then surely it would appear to a greater or less extent in their correspondence, for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. But instead of this, all these letters, breathe forth Christian sentiments; they have a religious tone, they speak of the mercy of God, of the gift of eternal life, of our duties to God; of the church, &c. They encourage, exhort and admonish one another, and in every respect they give proof of the higher life in the hearts of the writers, which could not well have been the case with men whose minds were engaged only with the vain and perishable things of this present time.

The first of these letters was written by Henry Hunsicker to Christian Herr of Pequea, about the time the latter united with the church. Henry Hunsicker was a bishop in the church. He was born in 1752, in Skippack, Montgomery

County. He was ordained to the ministry in 1782, and died July 8th 1836, at the age of 85 years, having served in the capacity of a minister 54 years, and most of this time as a bishop. He is said to have been both an able and eloquent speaker, of quick perception, mild but firm in his dicipline, and held in high esteem, both as a man and a preacher. Christian Herr, as may be seen by the following letters, united with the church in or about the year 1816, was chosen to the office of deacon about the year 1820, advanced to the ministry in 1835 and five years later, in 1840, ordained to the office of bishop, and died in 1853. He was the father of Benjamin Herr, bishop, and Amos Herr, minister, both now living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

The letter reads as follows :

November 30th, 1816.

"Highly esteemed brother, I received your letter of the 23rd. We are in the enjoyment of good bodily health, and thank God for his paternal love, and wish, as a sincere and friendly greeting, that you may prosper according to the good pleasure of God, both temporally and spiritually. May the dear Savior graciously inspire you with his Holy Spirit, that your spiritual eyes may possess that needful keenness of sight which will enable you to prove the spirits, however disguised they may be. Believe me, dear brother, if I had the wings of an eagle, I should already have visited you personally, since my return home ; however, in spirit I have often been with you. My prayers and petitions often ascend to the throne of God, that he may direct the good work, which he commenced in you to his glory and to your salvation. Amen.

"Should I in some measure, open my heart to you, dear brother, I would say that I believe, in the first place, that some have been re-baptized to them * who deceive themselves,

* The followers of John Herr, or as they are now called, 'Reformed Mennonites.'

saying that they received their first baptism, without conviction and without penitence. In the second place their forbidding to hear other denominations preach * is certainly a spirit of sectarianism of which the apostle plainly speaks, Col. 2 : 18, to the end of the chapter. Thirdly, they lack charity. Read 1 Cor. 13 ; Jn. 13 : 34, 35 ; and there are many other passages which I have not room to quote. Fourthly, I do not believe that since Jesus ascended to heaven the gospel has been preached to the whole world as a testimony ; for when this is done then will the end be. Fifthly, what they claim that the ministers of the Old church, as they call them, do not preach true repentance and regeneration, is without foundation. Sixthly, though I admit, that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the church was of one mind, and that they were anointed with the Holy Ghost, I do not believe that there were no spots or blemishes. This may be seen when we read the Acts of the Apostles. I do not look for such a church (without spot or blemish) among us, and I do not believe that it will be found with them. In the church militant, such a church in the full sense of the term, will not be found. May God grant that our names may be found in the book of life, in the church triumphant, which John saw in the Spirit, and which no man could number, from all nations, people and tongues, standing before the throne and clothed in white garments.

"Dear brother, You desire me to inform you of the principal doctrines of the Christian church on earth. Christ, the Son of the living God, came to us in this vale of sorrow and of tears, to seek sinners and save them, and this power of the salvation of Jesus, reaches all who believe in him ; he is the Author and Finisher of our faith. I believe that Jesus, the founder of his church, will be with his church—that is, with those who have learned meekness and humility

* Even at funerals or on other occasions to which one may unexpectedly or otherwise happen to be present, they entirely forbid their members to listen to the preaching of others.

in the school of Christ—and co-operate with them even unto the end of the world. Read Matt. 5 : 1—12, and also the 18th chapter, and you will see what Jesus requires of us, and how he sent out his disciples to teach the people, and to baptize the believing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them.

"But, dear brother, It just occurred to me, why thus write to one who himself is taught of God? I sincerely desire to see you with us. I have few unoccupied days. I have this week already baptized nine and cast two lots (chose ministers, bishops or deacons by lot and ordained them). Next Thursday there are to be two others cast, and in a week, a day of fasting and prayer has been appointed. On the 8th of December, if the Lord will, there are thirty-three to be baptized with us. How glad I should be to see you with us. I remain your sincere well wisher, and may the grace of God be with you and all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ."

HENRY HUNSICKER.

To Christian Herr, Pequea.

The foregoing letter breathes forth the spirit, not of cold formalists, but of the warm-hearted, devoted child of God, and thereby, as also in the contents, gives evidence that the life of God truly did exist in the church.

We will here give two other letters from Christian Nissley to the same person. Nissley also was a bishop in the church at the time when he wrote these letters, and from them it may be readily seen by what spirit he was moved. We are informed by such as were well acquainted with him, that he was a strict disciplinarian, from which we may conclude that he must also have been faithful in observing the rules and ordinances of the church. He was ordained to the ministry in 1803, and died in 1831. He was the father of Pre. Peter Nissley, now living in Donegal, near Mount Joy, with whom many of our readers are personally acquainted.

Mount Joy Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa.,
March 5th, 1818.

"A friendly greeting to you beloved and respected friends, Christian Herr, and family, and all who may hear this. I send you all a sincere and friendly greeting, in and through the great love, grace, and mercy of God, which appeared unto all men through Jesus Christ, and may the co-operating power of his Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.

"Dear friend and brother, through the abundant and gracious light and knowledge of God, which is in Jesus Christ, I will seek to become more obedient and faithful by the keeping of his commandments, through crosses, trials and temptations, and to endure to a happy end, which the Lord the righteous Judge promised to give to all them that love his appearing. I do not intend to write much this time because I am convinced that you are not ignorant of that which God requires of the children of men, namely, that they should love him with all their hearts, and with all the desire of their souls, and his fellow-man as himself: on these two commandments, says Christ, hang all the law and the prophets. Mark those who have prophesied of Christ and the new Testament! How could it have been made so as to be more easily understood? Again, he says, Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so unto them. O, this I will ever bring home to my own heart, into the secret chamber, where all believing souls rejoice in spirit, and love each other as brethren and sisters; and unite together as members of the body of Christ, which is the communion of the saints. Then will all such hearts and souls be able to unite themselves with him as the bridegroom of their souls, and have the hope of a better portion in eternity.

"The entire purpose and object of my writing is only to show you my love, and put you in mind of the little acquaintance we so unexpectedly made and enjoyed together, and since we also by writing may converse together, though we be absent from each other. We are, thanks be to

God, all well, and hope this may find you the same, desiring to be remembered by you all."

CHRISTIAN NISSLEY.

Mount Joy Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa.
Feb. 10th, 1820.

"Dearly beloved Brother, Christian Herr, family and friends, and all whom this may reach, a sincere and friendly greeting to you all, through the great love, grace, and mercy of our heavenly Father, in and through Jesus Christ. Amen. The reason of my writing to you is alone the remembrance of sincere love to you. For a long time already I have desired to have a conversation that might strengthen our love, and prove edifying; therefore, I send you this to show you that I often think of you, and that I have this confidence in you, that though we are not together personally, we may yet, in mind and spirit comfort ourselves and rejoice in God and in his grace, and truth, and in the righteousness of our Savior Jesus Christ, as Paul writes to his believing brethren, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.' In such joy may the Comforter, the gracious and blessed Savior fit us that we may comfort ourselves and encourage and edify ourselves one among another, that we and all men may consider our salvation, and make a proper use of the precious time of grace, that many precious souls may be brought to his rest, and to the heavenly feast where all things are ready, and nothing wanting except the coming. I for my part have always to complain of my weakness and inaptitude, to place my candle upon the candlestick, that it may give light to all them that are in the house. But that for which I feel the most sorry is that there are so many different opinions, and that they seek to hinder each other in the way, while we all believe in one and the same God.

"I am reminded of what Paul says, Romans 10 : 2, 'For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' This Paul himself experienced when he was so zealous for the traditions of the fathers, when

by the brightness of the Lord he was brought to the knowledge of the Lord. Through which circumstance many were led to believe in Christ, as you, beloved brethren and sisters, all abundantly know, and it is not necessary that I should teach you, but it affords me the greatest pleasure to manifest to you a small token of my love, and to be able to say something from the word of life that may be beneficial unto eternal life, in order that we may thereby comfort, encourage, and edify one another, because we do not know how soon the Bridegroom will come. Yea, that we may choose that better part, and with the children of God suffer a little affliction which hath the promise of great reward, and will be the inheritance of those that abide in the faith, and with the help of God, finish their course. All these shall obtain the crown. Amen.

"We are, thanks to God, well, and hope this may also find you the same. I commend you all to God and his grace, and wish you the kiss of peace. Written out of love and in memory of your friendship." CHRISTIAN NISSLEY.
MARIA NISSLEY.

To Christian Herr and friends.

We give here another letter written by Jacob Hostetter, of Manheim, bishop of the church in the northern part of Lancaster County, to Christian Herr and wife, some time after they had united with the church. Peter Eby was, at the time, Bishop of the district where Herr lived.

August 1st, 1818.

"A friendly greeting to you, my dear brother and sister, Christian Herr (Pequea), and wife, and I hope these lines may find you well, which would afford me sincere pleasure, but should it not be the case, we must receive with patience what the Lord may see fit to bestow upon us. Afflictions are often sent to us of God as means by which we may be brought nearer to him. This has already been the experience of many, and through afflictions many have been converted to God. I have often said that the enjoyment of health

is the noblest gift of God that we can enjoy in the time of grace. May God give grace to all that from him have obtained the light, that they may live to the glory of God, for not one will regret it in that eternal world of joy, when this life is past. I repeat it, we should be zealous to work out the salvation of our never dying souls in the days of health. This, however, can be done only by renouncing sin and with true self-denial, and in keeping the commandments; for Jesus says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, daily, and follow me.' In the keeping of his commandments we have, through grace, the promise of eternal life, as we may plainly see. Luke 10 : 25—28. There the Lord said to the inquiring lawyer, 'This do and thou shalt live.' In Rev. 22 : 14, we read, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' Therefore it is necessary to follow the teachings of his word and give heed to the same according to Matt. 5 : 17. 'This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.' And the apostle says, Acts 3 : 22, 23, 'For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you; and it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.'

"From this we may understand that God, through his Son Jesus, made known unto us his will, for in Baruch 4 : 1, we read, 'This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endureth forever: all they that keep it shall come to life; but such as leave it shall die.' So also in John, 14 : 21, we read, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself unto him.' Again, in the 24th verse he says, 'He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.' Brethren and sisters, and all who have bowed our knees and opened our lips before

God and the church, and have accepted his word, and sealed it with the covenant of baptism, as the apostle says, 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in Him.' 'For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Therefore we are in duty bound by the covenant of baptism to observe all things whatsoever he commanded us, for so the Savior teaches: 'Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Therefore, let us not be discouraged in the work which we have begun, but, with the help of God, become faithful soldiers. For the crown is not in the beginning, neither in the middle, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

"Therefore we have to wage a continual war against our enemies, before we obtain the crown, as a certain writer expresses himself, That he in this world has three enemies, viz: The devil, the world, and his own flesh and blood; and this no doubt every awakened person will experience. Therefore, the Savior in his word has provided an excellent means, because he himself, on the mountain experienced the temptation of the devil: and this means is, watching and prayer, which he commanded to all his followers. Yea, we are to watch and pray, and walk in humility, for humility brings us great blessings, and thereby we obtain grace from God; a great deal depends upon this, and he who possesses this virtue, is protected in his soul, blessed in his walk, blessed in time and happy in eternity.

"These are the strongest weapons of defense which the true follower of Jesus Christ has to bear, for we know, in a temporal sense, when an enemy is encamped before a city, and the city places her guards before the gates of the city, and the guards fall asleep, the enemy that is before the city may easily enter and spoil it; just so it is when we cease to watch over our hearts and neglect prayer; then comes the

enemy to spoil the city of the heart; for Satan is ever busy in his efforts to lead man from the narrow into the broad way, because he is the enemy of the happiness of the souls of all men.

"I have not written this as though it was a new thing to you, for I know that God has already given you so much light and knowledge that you fully comprehend the danger of the soul, but I have written it, prompted by a true and sincere brotherly love as an encouragement to you to exert yourself to become more and more faithful in living according to the will of God. Brother and sister, if we only could exert ourselves with all zeal and earnestness to walk in the light, as the apostle John directs us, 1 John 1 : 7, 'But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Amen.

"Continue in prayer, and watch therein; pray also for me, that the Lord may open the door of his word to me, that I may speak of the mysteries of his grace, and that he may reveal unto me what I shall say; and I will also remember you in my prayers as much as the Lord gives me strength."

JACOB HOSTETTER.

We will close this chapter with another testimony from Henry Kolb, from Montgomery County. His letter was also written to Christian Herr, after he had been chosen to the ministry.

Lower Salford Tp., Montgomery Co., Pa.
June 1st., 1824.

"A friendly greeting to you respected friend, brother, and fellow-pilgrim in the Lord; also to your ministers, and the whole church. Although not personally acquainted with them, we are under the same bond of peace, and through the grace of Jesus Christ, are bound together as one body, and the same Spirit; one baptism, one God the Father of all. With this assurance I wish to you and us the grace of God, peace through Jesus Christ, and the co-operating and

comforting power of his Holy Spirit, through whom we may be fitted and made worthy to every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

"Your visit last fall has induced me to write these lines, because it was a great encouragement to me. Your company was especially pleasant to me. I have often thought of you, especially of the time when I left you in Franconia; but there also nothing was left me but to say, Go on in the name of the Lord. The Lord will be with you. Do his work, and he will lead you, till under his blessing you may reach your home in peace. I was reminded of the words of the poet:

'An Gottes Gnad und milden Segen,
Ist Alles ganz und gar gelegen:
Und ohne Gottes Huld und himmel's Gunst,
Ist alles Menschen Thun umsonst.'

"'Finally, my brethren,' says the apostle, 'Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might: put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' Eph. 6 : 10, 11. Sincere prayer will make us strong to withstand all the fiery darts of the wicked. Therefore, since we know these things, let us be zealous, for we all desire to behold each other there in that glorious brightness of God, where there is joy and fullness of joy for ever and ever at his right hand * * * *. With this I will close. You will, however, find my writing full of weakness and imperfection, but if I could have made it better I would have done so. The apostle commends his brethren to God and the word of his grace, who is mighty to preserve, to edify, and to give the inheritance unto them that are sanctified. If the apostle gave this commendation, why should not we do likewise? Written from your weak brother, friend, and well wisher." HENRY KOLB.

To Christian Herr, Minister of the church in Lancaster Co.

In all the foregoing letters we have taken the liberty to make the necessary grammatical corrections, but in no case have we changed the author's meaning.

Our object in giving these letters is to show our readers the spirit which pervaded the hearts of the men who wrote them. To show whether we might reasonably conclude from the tenor of these letters that the writers were unconverted and unregenerated persons, or whether we might conclude that they were prompted and directed by the love of God; that they felt a warm interest in the church, and especially in the recently converted ; and that they in Christian love and zeal sought to fulfill their duties. If they had been light-minded and jesting characters, unconverted and not full of the grace of God, instead of speaking of his love, of the salvation of men, of our duties to God and of the Christian virtues, they would much more have written of the thoughts and things with which their hearts were filled, "for," as we have before remarked, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We also observe that these letters were written by different men, from different churches, and different places, which gives us reason to believe that the mind and spirit manifested in these letters, prevailed, at least, among the ministry, pretty generally. On the whole, these letters give us a very excellent testimony of the spiritual life then existing in the church, and if we compare it with the testimonies given in the preceding chapters, it harmonizes well, and thus we have a two-fold evidence of the correctness of our assertions, that the church in this time was not a dead church, but a living church. God grant that it may always remain a living church.

CHAPTER VIII.

LETTERS FROM VARIOUS PERSONS, &c.

On the 31st of January 1843, Christian Herr, being then bishop, wrote a long letter to John Herr, the so-called leader and founder of the Reformed Mennonite Church, in reply to a correspondence which had passed between them, in reference to the assertions, accusations and publications of John Herr against Christian Herr, and the church in general. In this letter Christian Herr gives his positive and emphatic testimony against the truth of the wholesale denunciations and accusations of John Herr against him and the church, and shows that in several instances John Herr misconstrued his words and misrepresented him. He also unhesitatingly denies and declares untrue, a number of personal charges which John Herr had brought against him. He also declares the charges of John Herr, that the ministers of the Old Church were unfaithful, unconverted and deceivers of the people, and that all manner of gross sins and carnal indulgences were tolerated in the church, without reproof, as unfounded and false, and sharply reproves him for his harsh and unjust condemnation of all professors outside of his own church, and also for claiming to himself and his followers the honor of being the only true church upon earth, and kindly warns him of the danger of such an assumption. He further states that the members of John Herr's Church are just as worldly-minded as others ; that they claim to be the pure church of God which existed in the days of the Martyr's, while they have an abundant display of pride and superfluity in their houses, and that their children are so given to pride, that when other parents make an effort

to bring up their children properly and with modest apparel, the children of the Reformed Mennonites are referred to as examples of pride and outward adornment.

Though placed under circumstances in which most men would have been prompted to severity, his letter, throughout, while containing many keen reproofs and unhesitating denials of wrong and unjust charges, breathes forth the spirit of love and friendly exhortation, and closes as follows. "I feel a peaceful determination hereafter to have no disputation on the subject of religion, either with you or any other person, neither by writing nor orally, neither publicly nor privately, as the enemy has little regard by what means he brings enmity between men, only so that he is able to cause strife and hatred. Therefore, my friend, let us be careful that we be not caught in his net. Herewith I commend you to God and his grace."

From this letter we further make the following extracts, from which the reader may judge for himself.

"What you write and teach in reference to conversion and regeneration is correct, only with this difference, that not all are led through the same experience, but whether it is enjoined upon a preacher to relate his conversion over and over again publicly to the people, I leave for you to decide."

"But that there are two kingdoms on earth, namely, The church of God, and the church of darkness, the holy Scriptures plainly enough inform every one that loves God and searches them; and that these two churches are separated from each other in every person, who by the convincing grace of God permits himself to be led by true repentance to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel demonstrates unto us as clear as the light of day; and when those, in whom this separation spoken of has taken place, learn of Jesus, true meekness and humility of heart, and remain faithful and watchful in prayer unto the end, all such members of his church, Jesus will know to find, and gather them together from the ends of the earth; so that there will be such a multitude that no one will be able to number them, of all nations, people, and

tongues, as John saw. Rev. 7. This church of God upon earth, had its beginning with our first parents Adam and Eve, and through all times until the present day, it has remained, and will remain until the end; and in proof of this the attentive reader will find, in the word of God, abundant evidence. He will also find that of such persons the apostles organized the apostolic church, and prescribed and left unto them rules and ordinances, as to how the church of Christ should be conducted, namely, where a union of such persons is formed and a church organized; and such have existed in the world from the days of the apostles unto the present time, as already referred to from the testimonies of the Martyr's Mirror. All such churches had, and still have, just as much the keys of the kingdom of heaven (that is, the power to bind and unbind, according to Matt. 16 : 19), as you and your church; for they had and still have the gospel preserved by the protecting care of God which contains the key to bind as well as to loose; and all those whom the key of the gospel binds on earth shall also be bound in heaven; and all those whom the key of the gospel looses on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. (Read what Hieronymus teaches on Matt. 16, Martyr's Mirror page 109, Ger. Ed.; Eng. Ed. page 135)."

From the above remarks the attentive reader may readily determine the views of the aged brother on the subject of repentance and conversion, and we also plainly see what he believed constituted an acceptable, true, christian church. He also gives his views in reference to church rules, ordinances and discipline in such a manner that no one need be mistaken in regard to them. His entire letter, though containing, as before remarked, many sharp reproofs, breathes forth the spirit of love and tender anxiety for the welfare of souls, for the church and even for his opposers. John Holdeman, who also read this letter, in his "History of the Church of God," says, concerning this letter, "As far as I could judge of the humility and spirit of the writer, I am inclined to think that Christian Herr's letter breathes the most humble and lowly spirit."

One thing in this letter appears to us especially remarkable, and that is this, that Christian Herr should be looked upon and accounted as an impenitent and unconverted man, and a teacher and leader of a dead and unconverted church, when upon the subject of repentance and conversion, he according to his own words, holds and acknowledges as correct, the same views as those which his accuser maintains and teaches.

We will now give a number of testimonies from witnesses still living, who can yet call to mind scenes and incidents, connected with the history, condition, customs and practices of the church during the time in which these accusations are made against the church, and some reach back even to the time before the Reformed Mennonite Church had an existence.

The kind reader will bear in mind, as we noticed in some of our former articles, that John Herr, in his writings, charges the Old Mennonite Church with all manner of immoralities, corruptions and gross sins which were practiced by the members, without reproof or notice being taken thereof by the church. Daniel Musser in his book reiterates these charges and vouches for the truth thereof and produces various evidences as proof of them, to some of which allusion has been made in some of the preceding chapters. He also desires, if these statements are not correct, to have them refuted and says that the older members know that they are true.

For these reasons we give the following testimonies, viz, First, to show the incorrectness of the charges of John Herr and Daniel Musser against the church; and, Secondly, To show the general character, conduct, doctrines, and practice of the bishops and ministers in the church in those times, as well as the general condition of the church.

With these remarks our readers will no doubt understand the bearing of what follows.

Bro. S. G. Kindig, of Lancaster County, Pa., writes, in substance as follows: "I will give you some information about the Mennonite Church for sixty years past. Francis Herr's father was a faithful minister in the church and

remained so to the end. He often complained of the actions of his son Frank, and seemed to trouble himself about him. As far back as I can remember there was always peace and union in the church, through our vicinity and conference, with the exception of what took place in Weaverland. There were also strict rules observed, and none of those things of which Musser writes were allowed. The church always stood in good report by the world and all others, except by the Reformed Mennonites. If any members were disobedient and did not observe the requirements of the gospel and the rules of the church, they were suspended or expelled for better fruit. And this was done ever since I know anything about the church."

S. G. KINDIG.

The following letter was addressed to Bro. Amos Herr.

November 23rd, 1876.

"Dear Friend and Brother, Amos Herr, Since I promised to write you and am a poor writer, and in all things feeling my inability, I tried to get another and an older brother to do this. I visited Peter Nissley but did not find him at home, and therefore asked the aged Christian Nissley, whether he knew of a time when the church was dead, and repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ were no longer preached, when the new life was no longer a requirement for church membership, and whether there ever was a time, in which adulterers, fornicators, drunkards and such like were no longer reproved and put away from the church? He told me, he did not know otherwise than this was done (viz, that the gospel was preached and transgressors reproved and expelled). And I, for my part, also do not know otherwise; and I was present on one occasion, upon which the old deceased brother, Jacob Hostetter excluded a brother. This may have been thirty years or more ago. So much from your unworthy brother, &c."

CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.

Cumberland Co., Pa.,——1876.

"Henry Rupp was a minister in our church. He was

ordained in 1810. He was a very earnest preacher. He preached repentance and conversion. Peter Eby was the bishop who usually served us. He was a strict disciplinarian and reproved the transgressor. He received me into the church, and his instructions to us were, that without repentance to God and faith in Jesus Christ all outward ordinances were vain."

SAMUEL ZIMMERMAN.

Cumberland Co., Pa.,——1876.

"Henry Rupp moved from Lancaster Co., to Cumberland, in 1807. In 1810 he was ordained to the ministry. He was an earnest, gospel minister. He admonished the transgressors and suspended them from the communion, while gross transgressors were expelled from the church. Peter Eby was usually our bishop, and before him Samuel Nissley generally held communion for us. They were both strict disciplinarians. After I was chosen to the ministry and attended conference the first time, Bro. Nissley led the conference. The same rules of order which we now have, he taught us then, and that with great earnestness. Peter Eby baptized me and ordained me to the ministry, and I am convinced that they then taught and maintained the doctrine of repentance to God, faith in Jesus and a new life, just as much as now."

GEORGE RUPP.

The brethren Samuel Zimmerman and Geo. Rupp are both ministers in the church in Cumberland Co., and Bro. Rupp is now 78 years old and has been in the ministry 44 years.

"I can testify that sixty-five or seventy years ago I was well acquainted with the bishops, Jacob Hostetter and Benjamin Hershey*, and that they conducted the church in accordance with the word of God. I am now 90 years of age.

her
MARY X SWAR.
mark

"I can testify that sixty years ago I was well acquainted

* Of Bishop Hershey it is said that he at one time got into difficulty on account of his son-in-law, through which he was considerably censured, but it is believed, was not in fault.

with the bishops, Jacob Hostetter and Peter Eby, and that they conducted the affairs of the church in accordance with the gospel, and I also saw Jacob Hostetter excommunicate a man from the church. I am now in my 79th year."

DANIEL ERB.

Manor Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"I well knew Bishop Jacob Brubacher. He was a true gospel preacher. He preached and enforced sincere repentance and a change of heart, because without this all the outward commands will not bring us salvation. He was a strict disciplinarian. I knew him 76 years ago and never heard anything bad about him. He received into the church, and excluded therefrom whenever it was necessary."

CHRISTIAN MELLINGER.

Manor Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"We the undersigned were very well acquainted with Bishop Jacob Brubacher. He was a true gospel preacher. He preached and insisted upon sincere repentance and a change of heart because without this all outward commands are of no benefit to our salvation. He was a good disciplinarian."

ABRAHAM WITMER (Minister),
JACOB WITMER,
ABRAHAM R. MILLER,
CHRISTIAN CHARLES.

Lancaster Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"Jacob Brubacher was bishop in our church, and a true gospel preacher. He baptized me. In his instructions to the applicants for baptism, he taught repentance to God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a new life, and this he also preached." CHRISTIAN HERR (Minister).

A pious old sister sends the following :

Salisbury Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"Peter Eby was our minister. He was chosen to the ministry in 1800. He was a strict disciplinarian. I remember

that my uncle (a minister) was deposed from the ministry in 1809, for taking undue advantage of a friend.

"In 1811 Bishop Eby expelled a brother on account of drunkenness and in 1815 he expelled another for adultery, and in 1823 another for drunkenness." ANNA HERSHEY.

Buyerstown, Lancaster Co., Pa., Nov. 22nd, 1876.

"This is to certify that I, Christian Metzler, now in my 86th year, became acquainted with Peter Eby, bishop in the Old Mennonite Church, in Weaverland, where I attended church before I was married, which was in 1819. I knew of him being called there to settle a dispute. The said Peter Eby was the first bishop in the Pequea Church, to which place I moved in 1831, and from that time was personally acquainted with him and conversed with him frequently until his death, and I can testify that he was a strict housekeeper in the church, and excommunicated from the church, those who did not live in accordance with the Old Mennonite Faith, and know of certain persons who were taken into the church by him, and excommunicated some years before I moved here."

CHRISTIAN METZLER.

Concerning the doctrine of Peter Eby, hundreds can testify that he preached a genuine gospel doctrine. He was a most remarkable man. Harris, in his History of Lancaster County, has given his biography, which the reader will find in a subsequent chapter of the work, to the correctness of which many can bear testimony.

West Lampeter, Nov. 21st, 1876.

"Peter Eby was ordained to the ministry in 1800. He was the bishop that officiated in our district. He was a very zealous, gospel minister and a strict disciplinarian. In 1807 he excommunicated a member at Strasburg (our district), for fornication; some years later one for misconduct and one for intemperance. The theme of his discourses was, repentance to God, faith in Christ Jesus and obedience to his word. He baptized me and my wife, and well do I remember how he

impressed upon us in the instructions he gave us, the need of a living faith in Christ, and a newness of life, without which all ordinances are vain. Yours in love." BENJAMIN HERR.

Bro. Herr is now bishop in the same district where Peter Eby, in his day, officiated.

Donegal, Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"Samuel Nissley was ordained to the ministry in the beginning of the nineteenth century He was the bishop in our district. He was a strict gospel minister. His theme of doctrine was repentance to God, faith in Christ, newness of life and obedience to his commands. Transgressors were reproved, and if no amendment of life was manifested, they were suspended from communion, and those who committed gross sins were excommunicated. Jacob Hostetter officiated as bishop in our district, after the decease of Bishop Samuel Nissley. He taught the same doctrine and was a very zealous minister and a strict disciplinarian. I know of such that were reproved and excommunicated by him. I was much in company with Bishop Peter Eby and Bishop Christian Herr (Pequea), and I often heard them preach, and can give them the same testimony. We also had some short-coming members then and have yet." PETER NISSLEY.

(Minister in the Donegal Church).

Earl Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa.,
Nov. 18th, 1876.

"Since you desire to know something in reference to Bishop Henry Martin, I will inform you that as near as I can learn, he was bishop already before the close of the last century and until 1825. You also desire to know whether he ever excommunicated members on account of transgressions. I recollect that in my youth I heard the old brethren say, that he kept house very strictly in accordance with the word; and if I remember rightly, he expelled his own brother-in-law on account of intemperance, and severely reprimanded his son and admonished him to repentance. Of others I have

positive information that he excommunicated them. Bishop Jacob Zimmerman often told me that he earnestly sought to conduct the church after the rules and instructions of old Henry Martin. I also myself have witnessed a number of excommunications by him. I am very sure, if this question would have arisen twenty years ago, before all the older people had died, there would have been many who could testify to the above and to a great deal more. The grace of God be with you all." GEORGE WEAVER.

(Bishop of the Church in Weaverland).

Manor Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"I heard preacher Jacob Brubacher preach from my youth, and he was a very zealous preacher. He taught repentance and a change of heart very earnestly, and that without these the outward commands and ordinances would be no benefit to us as regards our salvation. He was bishop in our church. I remember that he expelled three members from the church, one for taking undue advantage of his neighbor, one on account of of a quarrel, and one for drunkenness." JOHN CHARLES.

Petersburg, Lancaster Co., Pa.,
Nov. 17th, 1876.

"Herewith I send a couple of testimonies. I visited another old sister over 80 years of age, who can bear the same testimony in favor of the old bishops, but is entirely helpless so that she could not write her name. There are also other brethren of from 60 to 70 years, who said, that as far back as they could remember, the church was conducted in the same way as now. The old witnesses think that the bishops of the past, were more strict than those of the present time and did not pass by so much." JOHN B. LANDIS (Minister).

Lancaster Tp., Lancaster Co., Pa., 1876.

"In my youth I knew preacher Jacob Brubacher. When I lived with my uncle, Andreas Shenk, he and preacher Benjamin Hershey and deacon Mellinger came to our house. They had been to see Francis Herr. They said, they had tried

everything to bring him to see and acknowledge his fault, but he would not do anything, but greatly abused them. They also said, they had borne long enough with him; they would not go to see him any more, and could no longer hold him as a brother. The difficulty was about a horse He had taken undue advantage of a neighbor. Brubacher was bishop in our church, and when any committed a fault, they were excluded from communion, and if they did not reform they were excommunicated. I knew four whom he excommunicated. He baptized me, and in his instructions he taught us that without repentance to God and faith in Jesus, baptism would be no benefit. He told us that the whole ocean would not wash away a single sin." SUSANNA HERR.

Signed for her, by her request, by her son, Pre. Christian Herr in the presence of five witnesses. Her sight is nearly gone. This sister is 85 years old, but possesses a most extraordinary memory for her age. There are persons now living to whom she related this matter about Francis Herr, more than forty years ago, precisely as here given.

The foregoing statement proves beyond a doubt, that the statement of Daniel Musser, that Francis Herr had withdrawn from the Old Mennonite Church, because she was so corrupt that he could no longer, with a good conscience, remain in her communion, is incorrect. These brethren, as they said, had visited him for the last time, and declared that they could bear with him no longer. Besides this we have also positive evidence from several others that he was expelled. Hence we need have no hesitation in making the statement, that Francis Herr, instead of leaving the church to preserve his own conscience void of offense, *was expelled as a transgressor and a disobedient and unfaithful member* and that Daniel Musser's statement to the contrary, is altogether incorrect and without foundation.

Mount Joy, Lancaster Co., Pa.,
Dec. 5th, 1876.

"I heard old Bishop Jacob Hostetter preach from my

youth to the time of his death. He preached repentance and conversion. He baptized my wife and me and admitted us into the church. We were instructed that without true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, baptism and admission into the church would avail us nothing. He admonished us to be true to the Lord our God; to watch and pray; to remain steadfast and comply with the word of God, and not conform ourselves unto the world. Some of his remarks are still fresh in my memory. When he commenced to preach, he would ask the blessing of God, 'that his Spirit might rest upon us, be with us, among us and even in us.' And again, 'You say you believe: show it by thy works.'"

GABRIEL BEAR.

Mechanicsburg, Cumberland Co., Pa.,
Dec. 20th, 1876.

"With the assistance of Bro. Gayman, of Dauphin Co., who is 93 years old, I will try and give you a statement, as to how the church was conducted. My father was ordained to the ministry about 1817, as near as I can find out. He was ordained to the office of bishop in 1825. Bro. Gayman says, the church was more ardent and zealous in the cause of Christ then, than it is now. They preached repentance and faith in Christ, and were more strict in church discipline and the ordinances than they are now. I well know that my father expelled Daniel Diel for drunkenness and one other person whom I will not name, and different others were put back. Bro. Gayman also well recollects all this. Some of these things happened when I was yet at home. This was the manner in which the church was conducted at that time, and you can rely upon this statement as correct. I would have written sooner, but wanted to see what brother Gayman still recollected."

JACOB MUMAW.

Lancaster, Pa., Dec. 2nd, 1876.

"The following lines have reference to a book published by Daniel Musser, under the title of the "*Reformed Menno-*

nite Church," *&c.*, in which the author censures, accuses and defames the Old Mennonite Church for tolerating all manner of transgressions, and offending members in the church, without separating or excommunicating them. I will, therefore, give some account of events which transpired in the church, from my own personal recollections, to show that friend Musser is in error, and that he unjustly accuses the Old Mennonite Church as he does. I recollect when I was a boy, fourteen or fifteen years old, I was in church, in the Conestoga Township District, in Lancaster County, where Peter Eby had a number of applicants to baptize He directed his discourse to show and teach the necessity of repentance and faith before baptism. After his sermon he came forward and said to the applicants, If their desire was yet the same as they had expressed that morning, they should come forward, and then added the following words, "But if any of you should yet want more time for the purpose of searching the Scriptures more thoroughly, in order to be better prepared to enter into this holy covenant, you shall freely be at liberty to do so." All, however, came forward, were baptized and received into the church as members.

"After this was done, there were also two persons present, a man and a woman who for transgression had previously been put back and separated from the church, and were now desirous to be received into the church as members. Bishop Eby received the man first, and with mild words (or a light confession). No doubt this man had committed only a minor transgression; the words, however, I do not remember; but when he spoke to the woman, his words so fixed themselves on my mind that I still recollect some of them very distinctly. After many years I told my father how Bishop Eby's words, in receiving that woman back into church, had fixed themselves on my mind. "Yes," said he, "I mind well that it made me inquire for what reason this woman had been expelled, and when I heard the cause, I no longer wondered why he demanded so strong a confession."

"In these two cases we see that the lighter transgression was as little overlooked as the greater one. Our Friend, Daniel Musser, in writing of transgressions in the old church, says, that 'they had to be very flagrant if any notice was taken of them.' It may not be amiss in this place to quote the words referred to above, as they are still distinct in my mind. As they were spoken in the German language, I will quote them as they were spoken, '*Zum Ersten frage ich dich, ob du es erkennest und freimuethig bekennen kannst, dasz du mit Recht, um der Ungerechtigkeit, Suende und Uebertretung Willen, seiest neben die Gemeinde, zur Busze gestellt worden?*' These words translated into the English read as follows, 'In the first place I ask you whether you acknowledge it, and whether you can freely confess that you were, justly, on account of iniquity, sin and transgression, expelled from the church, unto repentance,' &c. These words do not seem to indicate any disposition on the part of the bishop to pass over the matter lightly.

"Several years later another instance took place in the same district, to which I also desire to call attention. One of the ministers became entangled in a law-suit. The church was not willing to bear this, and complaint was brought against the minister. Bishop Eby was called to investigate the case, and finally, with the consent and counsel of the church, silenced the minister.* Not being satisfied with the action of the church and the bishop, this man said, in rather an impertinent manner, 'Yes, well then, hold me as a heathen man and a publican,' which was accordingly done, and he was not again called to the ministry. Musser says, that it *was not uncommon for the members to be engaged in law-suits without reproof.*

"I will also call your attention to Bishop Jacob Hostetter of Lancaster Co., who was chosen to the ministry and proba-

* We are informed from the evidence of one of our old bishops, who knew him well, that Bishop Eby not only silenced this minister, but also at the same time suspended him from the communion of the church.—*The Author.*

bly also ordained to the office of bishop, a number of years before the so called New Mennonite Church was organized. He instructed and baptized both me and my wife and others at the same time, and received us as members into the church. He endeavored to impress on us the necessity of repentance to God, and faith in Jesus Christ before baptism, and often, very often had I heard him on such occasions, and this was always the doctrine he endeavored to inculcate into his hearers. He tried to make them sensible of their duties, and how indispensable this is to salvation. He also was at the head of the Lancaster County Conference for a number of years. It was his place on such occasions to admonish and to remind his fellow-bishops, ministers, and deacons, of the great responsibility resting on them in their ministerial duties. I was often present and heard him on these occasions, and his doctrine was always the same as above given. He always charged those assembled in Conference to be true and faithful in their duties, in the care of the flock. I also saw and heard him ordain deacons, ministers, and bishops, and he always charged deacons what their duty is when strife, discord, or disorderly conduct manifests itself among members. That when it becomes known to them they should carefully see after it, investigate and examine the same, and if possible have a reconciliation brought about; and if this cannot be done, then to follow the regular course and rule laid down in the gospel. He also charged ministers with their duties, and the bishops he especially charged and enjoined upon them, as a part of their duty, to teach their hearers, as above intimated, namely, Repentance to God, and faith in Christ Jesus, and to baptize the penitent if they desire it, and receive them as members into the church, and also with them observe the communion of the Lord's Supper, feetwashing, &c. He also charged them to watch over the flock, and if a member or members walk disorderly and are not willing to be reconciled and render satisfaction to the church, to separate and exclude such disorderly members. These things I have not from

hearing others say so, but I have seen and heard them myself, and some of them often, and I do not recollect of having heard this old bishop, speaking to his hearers of these weighty matters, but that tears could be seen rolling down his cheeks. How then can it be possible that Daniel Musser dare publish to the world, a book censuring and accusing the Old Mennonite Church as he does, and calling her a dead body, &c.? If charity or the love of Christ prompted him in that work, then I have not yet learned that charity or love.

"I also knew Bishop Christian Herr (Pequea). He lived almost in the same neighborhood with John Herr, the founder of the so called New or Reformed Mennonite Church, and at the same time.

"Christian Herr (Pequea), was ordained to the office of bishop by Bishop Peter Eby, and by him also strictly charged to observe the rules of the church according to the gospel, as above said, and to separate and expel from the church, as well as to receive into the church, and to spare neither layman, minister or bishop, if circumstances required it; and I know that he observed and carried out these rules and ordinances as long as health and strength permitted him to do so.

"All the above instances to which I have called attention in this article, except the second, have come under my own personal observation, and having been a hearer and an eye witness to them I can testify to the truth of them. The second case relating to the minister who became entangled in a law-suit, I have direct from the member who first brought complaint against him, and he was followed by a number of his fellow members; and it so happened that this brother was afterwards chosen to the ministry, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the excommunication of the former one.*

* From this coincidence some might be led to suspect unfair means, for personal ends or self-promotion, but as ministers in the Mennonite Church are chosen by lot, this cannot be the case. Should any one have such a design, it would avail him nothing, as the decision is left entirely in the hands of God to cast the lot as may best promote the glory of his name.

"The calling of Jacob Hostetter to the ministry and also to the office of bishop, occurred before my recollection, but it is about forty years since I first learned to know him, and during this time I know him to have adhered to the rules and principles given above. I recollect another instance where a neighbor of my father's, for strife and contention with one of his neighbors, on account of a line fence, was excluded from the church. This was done prior to the Spring of 1822, before my recollection, but I know that he moved out of the immediate neighborhood in the Spring of 1822, and that he was put back before he moved away, but how long I do not know. I remember well, when I was already a grown up young man, that my father reproved him for standing aloof from the church and exhorted him to come forward and be reunited with the church. From good and reliable tradition, I can name another instance of a member being expelled from the church for indulging too freely in spirituous liquors. This instance took place not less than one hundred and five years ago and may be one hundred and ten.

"I will now close by adding that my father was a bishop and my grand-father a minister; his brother and step-brother were both bishops; my great-grand-father on the grand-mother side, was also a bishop and one of his sons was a minister and another, a deacon. Often did bishops, ministers and deacons meet at my father's house, and staid with us over night. I have been acquainted with many of those bishops, ministers, and deacons, from far and near, from my earliest recollections, even from my childhood, and some of those men were from seventy to eighty years old, when I was only a boy from ten to fifteen. From my earliest recollections, I paid strict attention to their conversation and *far* was their talk from the idle sport, jesting and merriment of which D. Musser, in his book accuses them. But I sometimes heard some of them reprove members for light-minded talk. The grace of God be with you." JOHN SHENK.

"P. S. I have not given this line of the bishops and

ministers for the purpose of boasting, but to show how I had opportunities to become acquainted with these men, their views, principles, practices and conversations, even from my earliest recollections."

We have now given such a variety of evidences and testimonies to substantiate our position, and vindicate the character of our much despised church, that we feel it should be sufficient to convince the most unbelieving. Those who are filled with prejudice and envy towards us would not be convinced in any case, while the unprejudiced and impartial reader will already have seen how unjust and uncharitable these wholesale denunciations of Daniel Musser are. But we ask not for sympathy; we do not complain that the voice of slander has been raised against us. We rather rejoice that we are slandered and evil spoken of, for the Savior says, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." All that we ask is the opportunity to refute these accusations and vindicate the church by well substantiated and undoubted evidence. This privilege we have, and this we have aimed to do.

This is one of the very best proofs that our church is an acceptable church of God. The ensign of God's people has always been their faithful endurance under suffering; their meekness and forbearance, their sorrows and their tears, and of this our church has always had her full measure; and we are told that "whom God loveth he chasteneth." We expect to bear the cross; we expect to suffer for Jesus' sake, if we would wear the crown and reign with him, and we ought to rejoice with the apostle of old that we are accounted worthy to suffer for his sake. Therefore, as said before, we are not complaining, and not asking for sympathy in this that we are thus ill-treated; we only ask the privilege to show to our church at the present day and to our posterity, that of the

descendants of those who have once represented the pure Old Mennonite Church, John Herr and Daniel Musser with their followers, have not alone remained, but that the Lord, during all these times, has reserved unto himself more than seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and, that while with all others, we have a great deal to humble us, and nothing to boast of, we feel, that in the fear of the Lord, and with gratitude toward him who has preserved our church through all the centuries past, we are not claiming too much when we say, that we have the assurance and the most positive proof that the Lord has been with us, and is with us still. We readily admit, as said before, that we had our short-coming members and that we have them still, but we have never been forsaken, and are not forsaken now. The name of the Lord has been established among us, and has continually been with us to the present time, notwithstanding the assertions of envious, puffed up and self-righteous men to the contrary, and we humbly pray and trust that our heavenly Father will bestow upon this church, his grace and his divine blessing, that the church may be blessed and prospered, and children, and children's children may reap a rich harvest of grace from the seeds of piety and purity sown by their devoted ancestors.

We could have condensed some of the preceding letters more than we have done, but we feel sure our readers will peruse them with the same interest that we have done. And we believe too, that a perusal of them will give better satisfaction than a more condensed form would have done.

CHAPTER IX.

REMARKS, EXTRACTS, &C.

The following remarks and extracts are gathered from private letters and other sources, and are here given in confirmation of the facts already presented.

"Two of the most eminent bishops, in the Mennonite Church in the beginning of the ninteenth century, were Jacob Brubacher and Peter Eby." "The first of these," the writer says, "I heard preach only once when a boy. It was at a funeral. It was his last sermon and made an impression on me not yet forgotten; he was esteemed as a very pious and godly man, and many of his sayings are still remembered." He was born in 1751, ordained to the ministry in 1780, and not many years after he was ordained to the office of bishop. Of his preaching, an old sister now 78 years old, recently said, "That when she was but a young girl, she heard him preach at her grand-mother's funeral, and that the sermon made such an impression on her mind that she never forgot it." Among other things said on that occasion, in speaking of repentance, he made the remark, "Der Mensch musz geleutert werden wie Silber und Gold." Man must be purged or refined as silver and gold.

The same writer says of bishop Eby, "The doctrines of Peter Eby were sound Mennonite doctrines, based on true repentance and obedience. He was often at our house, and often did I sit and listen to him and others conversing of spiritual things. I often heard him preach and can heartily bear

testimony to all that has been said of him. He was a most remarkable man."

"With Jacob Hostetter I was quite familiarly acquainted. He was a very zealous man. Methinks I can yet see the tears rolling down his cheeks, when pleading with sinners and encouraging the brethren. O, how he encouraged me to be a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion after I was ordained to the ministry. May I never forget it. He died in 1865, at the age of ninety-one years. It is said that he was ordained to the ministry when only twenty-five years old. After the death of Peter Eby, he was at the head of the Lancaster County Conference. Bro. Benjamin Herr, who was a fellow bishop with him during nine years, fully substantiates the testimonies given him."

In reference to the character of Bishop Peter Eby, we would yet add the following.

Jacob Stauffer to whom we have previously referred, in his German work speaks well of him, and Alexander Harris, in his Biographical History of Lancaster County, also gives the following most excellent account of him, "This member of the family deserves more than a passing notice. His fame as a preacher was widely known, and served to fill the houses to their utmost capacity wherever he was known to officiate. The ministers in the Mennonite Church are not educated for the pulpit." "The bishops have also certain districts allotted to each, and the privilege of presiding among them, is generally accorded to the senior in office or the most eminent in abilities. This position Peter held for many years up to the time of his death; and his authority also extended over the church in Canada, until he was succeeded there by his younger brother Benjamin. To form some idea of his powers as an orator, it is necessary to state that the principal sermon in the Mennonite Churches was always prefaced by an introductory discourse from one of the younger ministers present; and that on communion day, the subject invariably used to be Bible History, from Adam down, bringing out prominent

events and prophecies pointing to the new dispensation. The introductory discourse generally brought it down to the time of Noah and Isaac when it would be taken up by the bishop and continued to the birth of Christ, his ministry on earth and his final sufferings and death. Old as the story had become, the audience never tired listening to it from the eloquent lips of Peter When he slowly arose, all noise subsided into an almost painful expectation. Then he would break the silence with a kind and fatherly greeting to his hearers, and glide gently into the course marked out for himself. Proceeding step by step, describing, explaining, illustrating and sustaining his points as he went along, with copious quotations from the Scriptures, for all of which he drew upon his extraordinary memory; he would gradually warm up into his theme, and, when under full sway, his discourse moved along, like a deep, clear stream, rolling ocean-ward, without a break or ripple, grand, majestic, and irresistible. His powers, however, were brought out most fully when he came to portray the acts and sufferings of his Master during his last few days upon earth. The scene in Gethsemane; the sleeping disciples; the noise and tumult breaking upon the stillness of the night, when the armed men came to take him; the doings before the Jewish and Roman tribunals; the embarrassment of Pontius Pilate, and his fruitless device to save; the message sent him by his wife; his last resort, when he gave the Jews to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, and the cries of the infuriated multitude that pronounced his condemnation. Then the sorrowful train moving up Calvary; the preparation to carry the fearful sentence into execution; and lastly the finishing act of the sublime drama; the Savior of mankind nailed between heaven and earth, his side pierced, and yet with parched lips in the agonies of death, crying to the Father to forgive; the darkening of the heavens, the quaking of the earth and the elements bearing witness, in thunders and lightning, to the divinity of him who was suffering. All this he would portray in a manner so vivid, that the speaker would be

forgotten in the subject. Then as his voice, suppressed by emotion, and sinking into silence, would allow the attention of the hearers to return to the speaker, he would stand before them, tears streaming down his cheeks, his countenance glowing, and his raised hands directing the penitent sinner, as it were, to the foot of the visible cross. His preaching was altogether extemporaneous, and its effect upon an audience, great. And yet he was not a sensational preacher; he addressed the judgment as well as the feelings, and his discourses abounded in arguments and reasonings that were listened to with admiration by the most polemical or logical. So much was this the case, that it frequently happened, that strangers hearing him for the first time, although otherwise informed, would not be convinced that he was not a person regularly educated and trained for the ministry.

"An acquaintance of his, who had heard some of the most noted orators of the state and nation, in and out of the pulpit, gave it as his opinion, that for none of them, it seemed, had nature done so much, towards making the "Orator," as for this grand, old servant of the church. In the councils over which he presided as bishop, his voice was equally potent. His clear intellect enabled him to probe difficulties to the bottom; and his impartial decisions, pronounced without fear or favor, were acknowledged to be just, and rarely appealed from. He died April the 6th, 1843, in the seventy-eighth year of his age."

John Holdeman, in his writings, after quoting the above, says, "This brother was a ministering servant in the church for about forty-three years, and, according to the above and other testimony, was an impartial man, and by no means as corrupt and dead as D. Musser, John Herr and others would have us believe; for they make no exceptions of any one (in the church) being yet a living member of Christ, and therefore, he is no doubt also included in their accusations against the ministers and the church. According to what J. Stauffer writes of this brother (Peter Eby), he did not suffer such sins

and transgressions in the church as John Herr and his associates charge the Old Mennonites to have tolerated." "I have the testimony of Amos Herr, that he inquired of the old bishops of different localities, whether the church was so corrupt as it is represented by the Reformed Mennonites, and they said that it was not. I am personally acquainted with Bishop Abraham Rohrer. He experienced a change of heart and preached in power. He is now about eighty-six years of age, and was personally acquainted with the Bishop, Peter Eby, above referred to, and also gives him a very good testimony. He is also acquainted with the Reformed Mennonites and claims that they misrepresented the matter concerning the Old Mennonites. He has been bishop over forty years and was the principal man in the Ohio Conference for many years, and his influence reached to Canada and other states. He did not tolerate such transgressors in the church as are named by the Reformed Mennonite writers. This brother was about twenty-two or twenty-three years old when the Reformed Mennonites organized and did not live far distant from them at the time when they organized, and therefore should know something concerning the state of the church in that locality in 1812—the date of the new organization."

Samuel W. Pennypacker of Philadelphia, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information in regard to the early history of our church, in this country, has, in his library, a copy of Godfried Arnold's *Kirchen and Ketzer Historie*, which Bishop Henry Hunsicker of Skippack, (whose name has already been mentioned in a former chapter of this work, as the author of a letter to Christian Herr, in 1816), together with John Kassel, Benjamin Johnson, Isaac Hunsicker, George Clemens, Isaac Kassel, Harman Pannebecker, Godschalck Godschaclk, Benjamin Johnson Jr., Gerhard Clemens and Henry Pannebecker imported, jointly from Europe, January 29th 1785. It certainly required no small degree of interest in the church and her history, to be willing to meet the difficulties and the expense of importing so large a work from Europe,

and though it may not show any special degree of piety or purity in Christian life, it certainly does not indicate that these persons were such light-minded, cold, indifferent characters as they are represented to have been. What a man reads is pretty generally a good criterion of his life and character, and if the libraries of our Mennonite families, in those days especially, and even down to the present time, may be taken as evidence in the matter, or as an exponent of the inner life, what can we say of a people, or what conclusion must we arrive at, when we find that in their houses they had, almost exclusively, such books as the Bible, the New Testament, Martyr's Mirror, the writings of Menno Simon, Detrich Philip and Johann Decknatel, Denner's Predigtbuch, Arnold's Erste Liebe, Arnold's Kirchen and Ketzer-Geschichte, Huebner's Bible Narratives, Confession of Faith, Lustgaertlein, Hymnbooks of different kinds, and others of a similar character? Even in the schools the children were taught their first lessons out of a primer, a large portion of the contents of which were selections from the New Testament, after which they were advanced to the New Testament and the Psalter, or book of Psalms. These were the text books in their schools; and a people who are educated from books of this class, and who exert themselves to secure this class of literature, as we have seen in the former parts of this work that our Mennonite people have done, are not likely to become what our accusers try so hard to make them.

Samuel W. Pennypacker, in a letter written December 11th 1877, says, "Direct evidence as to the spiritual condition of the church in past years is not easily obtained, because when people are virtuous, they are not apt, if modest, to declare their merits, either in writing or print. The tenet of non-resistance was strenuously maintained by the Mennonites during the revolutionary war, and some of them were, in consequence, imprisoned. Christian Funk, for a slight deviation in this respect, was put under the ban. One of the best indications of what people have in their minds and hearts, is what

they read. The 'Martyr's Book' was translated into the German language and has passed through four editions. The 'Handbuechlein' of 'Dirck Philips,' was also translated from the Dutch and three editions have been exhausted. The 'Wandelnde Seele' has been translated into both German and English and the editions are numerous. The extensive publishing-houses of Billmeyer at Germantown, Ehrenfried and Baer at Lancaster, all of whom were to a very large degree sustained by the Mennonites, and whose publications were almost exclusively religious, prove that the tastes of the church did not run toward frivolity.

"My own great-grand-father, Matthias Pannebecker, who was born in 1742 and died in 1808, was a bishop and the founder of the church at Charlestown, near Phoenixville, Chester County, Pa. He was a miller, and so strict in his conduct that when loaning money to struggling friends, as he often did, he refused to take note, bond or mortgage. He would not permit a door in his house to have lock or key. He was the first person in that part of the country to discountenance the use of liquors in the harvest-field, which was then the universal custom. That his course of life accorded with the sentiments of his fellow Mennonites, is shown by the fact that when he died, his funeral was attended by people from five counties, who drove that distance to show their regard for him. In fact all the writers, both in Europe and America who have said anything about the Mennonites, have, so far as I know, given uniform testimony as to their simplicity, honesty, industry and rectitude."

Many instances of a similar character might be given, which in themselves might appear trifling, yet nevertheless give us a true index of the heart and spirit by which our old people were actuated. Saturday, in the true scriptural sense of the word, was *preparation day.*—A day of general cleaning up and getting ready for Sunday, so that no unnecessary work would have to be done on the Sabbath. On Sunday morning, after the breakfast things were away, the floors

were carefully swept and wiped and the house put in order for the day. If it was meeting-day * the family would be ready at an early hour to attend their accustomed place of worship. If it was an intervening Sunday, or from any cause the family was detained from attending public worship and no company was present, books were taken and the time spent in reading and meditation. The Bible, Testament, hymn-book, a book of sermons, or some other edifying book was taken and the time profitably employed in reading them. The children were instructed in the same manner and earnestly admonished to walk in the pious ways of their parents, and thus both by precept and example the children were taught to respect the Sabbath and honor God On a certain Sabbath morning, perhaps sixty years ago, an aged grand-mother was sitting in her chair, in the room where the girls had just been sweeping and wiping up the floor. When they had done, she said, "Ah, if only our hearts too, were cleansed like this floor." "I often had to think of this incident," said my mother, as she related it, many years afterwards. My own grand-mother, who died in 1852, at the age of eighty years, was nearly blind, and on account of her infirmities could no longer attend public services, always, when circumstances admitted it, insisted on having a sermon, or at least a part of a sermon, from Denner, read to her on Sunday forenoon.

Of this character we could gather up a great many incidents and testimonies as evidences of the inner life of men and women in the church in former days, which show a very different state of things from that which our accusers claim. It is very true that such a condition of things may not have existed in every Mennonite family, because there were always those who were not as faithful as they should have been, but this spirit of piety and Christian devotion was the rule and not the exception, and its influence was observed and felt wherever one mingled in their society, and we would here

* In many places it was the custom and is still, to hold meetings only every two weeks at each meeting-house.

repeat what we have said in a preceding chapter, that we have no right to condemn a whole church, because some of the members do not live as upright a life as they ought.

An aged mother, a widow, said to me, "Our oldest son, when a boy, fell into a bad habit which caused us a great deal of sorrow, and my husband and I, used every means in our power to break him of it, but all to no purpose; he continued in the habit. At last we counseled together and determined to lay the matter before the Lord and make it the burden of our daily prayers. This we did for a time, and in a little while the answer came, and to our great joy the boy, of his own accord, left the evil habit and we had no further trouble."

A minister who was born before the close of the eighteenth century, and who died some years ago at a very advanced age, on two occasions, not very far apart, had his spring-house entered on Saturday night and the entire week's supply of bread, &c. stolen. The matter was passed by without any effort to discover the thief or bring him to justice, though strong suspicion rested on a neighbor who had a considerable family, and was very poor and shiftless. This poor neighbor some time after took very sick and lingered a long time, and his family, as a matter of course came to want. Our old brother promptly provided for their necessities, and like the good Samaritan offered to do more if it was needed.

Another minister we could mention, who had valuable property stolen, and believed he knew well where it was, but made no effort to recover it. He thought it better to follow the scriptural injunction "not to ask it again." The same brother had other valuable property taken from him to a considerable amount, which he could readily have held by law, but rather than go into litigation, he gave it all, believing it to be "more blessed to give, than to receive," or to suffer the spoiling of one's goods, than to seek justice at the hands of the law. So careful was he, indeed, in regard to this matter, that he prohibited his heirs, even, from making any effort to recover it after his death. It requires a good deal of true,

religious principle and love to Jesus, to be able to bring into actual practice the true spirit of endurance and non-resistance as exhibited in the life of the Savior and in the life of many of his followers, and we could hardly believe that the light-minded, unconverted men of friend Musser's ideal, dead church, would be able to present to their descendants, examples of meek endurance like these.

Henry Funk made a provision in his will that no debts of his estate should be collected by law, and all the provisions set forth therein show the inoffensive spirit of Christian piety and devotion to the teachings of Christ.

During the difficulties which occurred in the church, in eastern Pennsylvania, in 1847—48 on account of the disobedience and innovations of John H. Oberholtzer, in Bucks County, and the Hunsicker faction in Skippack, Montgomery County, there still remained, in the Old Church, so much love to God and the teachings of the Savior as to enable them, by the grace of God, to fulfill the teachings of Christ in a most noble manner, and leave to the world one of the most glorious examples of self-denial and devotion to their religious principles, presented to us in modern times. The new factions claimed the old meeting-house and were determined to have it at all events. The property was one of considerable value and justly belonged to the Old Church, and any impartial judge or jury would have, without any scruples, freely accorded it to them, had they presented their claims, but instead of doing so, they chose rather to obey the scriptural injunctions "not to resist evil, and of him that taketh away thy goods, not to ask them again," and quietly, leaving the new factions in possession, they purchased other grounds and built themselves a new house.

There are other men also who could give similar testimony, and other incidents to illustrate our point. We could gather up many of such a character, to show the piety, the steadfastness, the self-denial, the patience, meekness, forbearance, benevolence, charity and prayerful watchfulness of the

faithful men who during the past century, have lived, and labored, and died in the triumphs of a living faith, in the Old Mennonite Church; but we have already said enough. We have shown that the accusations so boldly made by Musser and Herr are to a large degree only the result of envy, prejudice and selfrighteousness, and that they are almost altogether incorrect and untrue. They made false and unwarranted assertions; and even contradict themselves. The assertion that a certain minister in the Old Church voted twice at the same election, has been proven entirely without foundation, from the fact that no person can be found, even among his most intimate friends and acquaintances, who ever saw, or heard of him being at the polls, after he was chosen to the ministry. The same minister has been charged with intoxication, and this charge also has been satisfactorily refuted by a number of reliable witnesses. It was the common custom of all, in those days to use liquors, but drunkenness could as little be borne with then, as now; and as we have seen that members were expelled for this crime, it is not likely that this minister could have been given to such a bad habit without reproof. A number of persons testify that he was a perfectly sober man, and that he did not attend elections after he was called to the ministry.*

Mark now an example of inconsistency. John Herr says the church was without discipline. Musser vouches for the truth of it. The writings of Abraham Landis, quoted by D. Musser, were composed in the same period of time that John Herr wrote. Landis refers to two instances of excommunications of members from the church, by a certain bishop. Landis was one of the first ministers of the Reformed Mennonite Church, and the especial friend and fellow-laborer of John Herr. Now, how can John Herr say that the church was

* Musser, in his book, gives no clue as to whom he had reference, in speaking of this minister. He however told two of our ministers, who visited him shortly before his death, who this minister was. Hence the above remarks.

void of discipline, and Musser comfirm it, while Landis declares that at least two excommunications of which he has knowledge, had taken place within a short time? We should have thought Musser would have guarded himself against such a contradiction.

It will be perceived that in our testimonies, we have chiefly given such as relate to the life and conduct of the ministry. The reason of this is, because the lives and actions of the leaders of any association of persons, are more distinctly marked and observed; and as Daniel Musser himself asserts, that the character of a church depends in a large measure on the character of the ministry, we may very safely determine that where there is a living, faithful, devoted, god-fearing ministry, a church of like character will be found. If the church was as Daniel Musser represents it, then her ministry must have been the same. But we have abundant testimony that the ministers of that day were more devoted and more strict and zealous than many at the present day.

In regard to excommunication, sufficient evidence has been given, to show that the bishops and ministers of that day tried as much as was in their power, to preserve the church pure, and that the church was not without discipline. The testimonies we have given show positively, that excommunications did take place, and that the ministers and bishops of that day did guard with zealous care and watchfulness, both the doctrines and the morals of the church. That they had their trials and their difficulties as well as we in our day, and as all other churches had, no one will deny; and that there were weak members, that there were unfaithful men, both in the ministry and among the members, we freely admit; but this would not make a dead church, neither would it form a cause to reject the church. "To err, is human; to forgive, divine," "and charity covereth the multitude of sins."

In the conclusion of this part of our subject, we desire to notice, that in all the testimonies here presented, not one agrees with that of Herr and Musser, and Musser says that

the older members know that what he writes is true. A brother minister made special inquiry of the older members, wherever opportunity presented itself, and the unanimous testimony of all who were asked, was, that they knew nothing of such a condition of things. Indeed they had so much charity, that if the evidence could not have been shown, they would not have believed that it were possible, that such accusations could have been brought against the church by any one.

CHAPTER X.

DOCTRINES OF DANIEL MUSSER—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

We wish to notice, now, several questions which are presented to us, by D. Musser, in his book, as points of doctrine; and for the purpose of showing our readers what he teaches, from his own words, we will here give a number of quotations. On page 13 of his book we find the following in regard to the church of God in Eden. "There is nothing said in the word that there was a church existing in the garden of Eden; but as the relation which existed between man the creature, and God the Creator, is the same as that which is said to exist between God and the church, it would seem to favor or countenance the idea, that man's fellowship with and access to God, his purity and holiness, constituted a relation which might be called a church."

After speaking of the fall of man and setting forth his utter ruin, he continues on page 14, "Nevertheless, man had not fallen beyond the power of God to redeem or restore him, and there is abundant evidence that God had not utterly cast him away. So soon as man fell, God gave him the promise of a Redeemer, and those who believed this promise and trusted in that Redeemer, he had also promised to bless and protect; and so far God had pleasure in them, as believing him and depending on the promised Redeemer. But no outward deed or action of theirs gave God pleasure, if not accompanied with faith. It is said of those things which God had commanded Israel to do, that he had no pleasure in them. But the faith

which moved them to obedience, was what pleased God and moved Him to give witness of approval to that which they had done. *God imputed their faith unto them for righteousness.*"

"Scripture testimony shows that the number of those who thus believed and trusted in God's promise, were few in comparison to the number of people which existed on earth. These, whether few or many, *were under the promise and constituted the people of God.* They had an interest in the Redeemer, but themselves were under *bondage till the time of his coming*, and working out this redemption, when their debt would be paid and they delivered from their captivity. With all such believers God made a covenant, and being under that covenant, they were under God's favor and blessing."

On page 15 he says, "Under the old covenant God calls the believers his people ; but under the new covenant he calls the believers *sons, daughters and children.* Under the old covenant in all his dealings with his people, he never once speaks of a church. The word is never once used in the Old Testament." Again on page 16, he makes this remark, "It is evident then that we become children of God by a spiritual birth, but we surely cannot be born of the Spirit without becoming partakers of or possessing the Spirit. *All men must certainly have been in their sins, till Christ came and satisfied the justice of God*, by dying on the cross for the sins of man. Inasmuch as they were in their sins, they could not receive the Holy Spirit, because he would not dwell in a defiled temple. *We do not read of any* one receiving the Holy Ghost from the time of the fall of man till after Christ had ascended into heaven, and sent the Comforter with great power on the day of Pentecost."

On page 17, he makes the most remarkable expression, that "John the Baptist and those spoken of (Elisabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, &c.), were yet in their sins because the blood of Christ was not yet shed ; and without the shedding of blood

there is no remission [of sins.] True, they had an interest in Christ by faith, but did not realize it until Christ died." And again, "Obedience to the law could not give any one the Spirit, and from the testimonies cited, it is evident that the old covenant believer, could not possess the Holy Spirit; and if not, then he could not be born of him, and could consequently not be a child of God. *To be a child of God we must be born of the Spirit.* It is further to be observed that God called Abraham and blessed him, and gave great promises to him and his seed. God renewed these promises to Israel afterward, and especially by Moses. He said he would be *with* them, dwell *with* them, be *amongst* them; he would be their God and they should be his *people:* but in all his promises and sayings, he does not once say to them as he does to the New Testament believer, that they shall be his sons and daughters. We never read anything of their being *born* of him, or of his dwelling or being *in* them, and they *in* him. Neither do we ever read of God and them having communion or fellowship, nor even they having fellowship one with another. God had, as I have said, given promise of the woman's seed, and to Abraham the seed in which all the families of the earth should be blessed. They who believed this promise, *received witness that they were righteous.* This was all they could do for the time then being, but did not give them the Spirit nor make them children."

On page 19, occur these declarations, "From the time of the fall of man till Christ died on the cross, all mankind were sinners and regarded as such of God" "If then, they were in their sins, they could not draw nigh to God, or have fellowship with him; nor could God, as the Holy Ghost, dwell or abide in them, in this defiled state or condition." "All mankind in this time were under the covenant *of the law, unbelievers as well as believers*, but there was this difference: The believer embraced the promise of the Father and relied on it, and dying in this state, *although dying in his sins*, was still under the promise, and at Christ's coming and mak-

ing the atonement he received the benefit of it," &c. * * * "But the unbeliever died in unbelief, having rejected the promise," &c.

Again we read on page 23, "If we attentively observe the testimony which the Scripture gives of these three great classes of mankind (viz, The believers under the Old Testament, the believers under the New Testament, and the unbelievers under both Testaments), we cannot fail to perceive that unbelievers under either covenant, or believers under the old covenant, could not, in anywise, answer the purpose, or serve as material of which to build such a structure as the church of God is declared to be; or that any organization of such people could be formed, which would, in any way answer to that glorious body which Christ gave himself for and purchased by his own blood."

Speaking of the reason why God, under the old dispensation did not form a church, on page 24, he presents this question, "Why did God not build up a church under the old covenant? Which it is so far from God's doing, that he does not even speak of it, the word church not even once occurring in the Old Testament. The reason is obvious: There was not material out of which it could be done." "All mankind being unregenerate there could no church be formed, until Christ came and by his death, prepared the soul of man for the habitation of the Holy Spirit."

Speaking of the promise of God to man after the Fall, Friend Musser presents this idea, "By believing in this promise, he had assurance of deliverance from his fallen state and restoration to that favor with God which he had lost by transgression and sin. This promise, however, made no change of the relation existing between God and man; it took not that from man which forbade his approach to God or gave him anything of the nature which he had lost by transgression. It only gave assurance that this would be done."

After giving an account of the formation of the first apostolic or Christian Church, he says, on page 44, "This was the

first association of man that ever existed on earth, as a true, living *church*."

From the foregoing extracts we gather the following conclusions, in reference to the doctrines which Musser teaches:

1. That between the fall of man and the death of Christ on the cross there was no forgiveness of sins. He says positively that all who died previous to that time, died in their sins, mentioning John the Baptist and others.

2. That there were no children of God, previous to this time, because there were none regenerated, and could not be regenerated, because there could be no forgiveness of sins, and no means through which to bring them unto a union with God, and into the relationship of children.

3. That there were none who possessed the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God, because the Holy Ghost was not yet poured out. Consequently none could have been moved, led and directed by that Spirit during all this period.

4. That there was no church of God, or that God had no church, previous to the organization of the first Christian Church on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. As a reason why God did not establish a church it is said that there was no proper material from which to form it, which would unavoidably follow if the first three of the foregoing conclusions were correct.

An examination as to whether these conclusions, or any of them, are true and will stand the test of the word of God, will form the subject of this chapter and the succeeding one. The subjects which present themselves in this connection are important, and we feel a most solemn responsibility resting upon us in being required to appear before the public in a vindication of these important doctrines. May God grant us grace to do it with an eye single to his glory, and for the benefit of his people.

The forgiveness of sins is one of the most important subjects that presents itself to our consideration in connection

with the plan of salvation. Without the forgiveness of sins, none can enter the kingdom of heaven. Upon this doctrine are based all our hopes of salvation, and this forgiveness has reference to the whole human family, in whatever age of the world they may have lived, whether before the flood or after, whether under the Mosaic or Gospel dispensation. But the question has been raised whether forgiveness of sins was or could be granted by Jehovah, under the law, or Mosaic dispensation, or whether it could, according to the divine economy, be granted only under the Gospel dispensation which was established after the death of Christ. Daniel Musser advanced the idea, and labored hard to prove his possition correct and in accordance with Scripture, that under the old dispensation, that is from the fall of man until the death of Christ, there was no forgiveness or pardon of sins, and could not be until after Christ died and satisfied the law. It is our present purpose to inquire whether this view can be maintained by God's word or not.

Musser holds, that those who believed in the promises of God were received into the favor of God, and God blessed them, and "imputed their faith unto them for righteousness." "*These were under the promise and constituted the people of God.*" "They had an interest in the Redeemer, but themselves were under bondage till the time of his coming." "With all such believers God made a covenant, and being under that covenant, they were under God's favor and blessing." According to our view of the matter, Musser here plainly contradicts himself. That God who is just, a righteous and a holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, could choose a nation or a portion of the human family, upon whom was still resting his curse, the penalty of the broken law, his divine and just wrath, which held them under the bondage of sin; a people still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, groaning under the burden of iniquity and transgression unremoved and unforgiven, a people in the hearts of whom his Spirit could find no resting place and

who were altogether unfit to form a church of God, a people who must live and die in their sins, as his "peculiar people," bestow upon them his favors and blessings, make with them a most solemn covenant, give them his promises and "impute to them their faith for righteousness," is to us, we must freely confess, an incomprehensible mystery. That God, consistently, with his divine attributes, could have chosen a people, dead in trespasses and sins, a people who as Musser says, "*Must certainly have been in their sins till Christ came*," and bestowed upon them his special favors and blessings, and in a special manner revealed himself to them, made known to them his laws and promises, watched over them, gone before them, led them, protected them, been with and dwelt amongst them, and still regarded them as vile, unforgiven sinners, is a doctrine that is not only in itself contradictory, but unfounded in the word of God.

The Bible teaches plainly and distinctly, that in reference to our relations with God, we cannot occupy two opposite or contrary positions, or be subjects of two different and separate kingdoms at once. We cannot enjoy the light and sit in darkness, or serve God and mammon, or be saint and sinner at the same time. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? We must be either one or the other. We must belong either to the people of God, or to the world. God has designated in his word only two classes, and to one of these two classes, the whole human race belongs. Consequently, those believers who lived before Christ, have been either God's people or God's enemies. Either they must have obtained forgiveness of their sins, or they must have remained in their sins. If they remained in their sins and received not forgiveness, then they cannot have been God's people; God never could have dwelt among them; never could have been with them; never could have chosen them for his people and bestowed upon them the blessings which he did. They could never have received the benefits of God's promises, never have had

an interest in the Redeemer, and consequently they could never have been saved.

But if, as Musser says, they enjoyed the favors and blessings of God; if they were under the promise and constituted the people of God and had an interest in the Redeemer, then their sins must have been forgiven them, for no human soul can belong to God's people, while his sins are not forgiven; no person can have an interest in Christ the Redeemer of men, and continue in his sins. Hence Musser's conclusion, that believers under the Old dispensation remained in their sins and thus lived and died, while at the same time they enjoyed the promise and possessed the faith which was imputed to them for righteousness, is not only entirely contrary to human reason, but also altogether opposed to the teachings of the word of God, as we shall yet further show.

The faith of believers, in the promises of God, under the Old Dispensation, according to Musser's own statement, was imputed to them for righteousness, and this faith in the promise of a coming Redeemer was just as effectual and just as sufficient for their justification, as our faith to-day, in a Savior who has already made his appearance and paid the price of our pardon with his own blood upon the cross. Justification is the result, the fruit of a living faith and true and sincere repentance, and if any one under the law—the Mosaic dispensation, turned to God with a sincere heart, repented of his sins and accepted the promise of a coming Redeemer, and walked in accordance with the laws, the precepts and commandments of the Lord, that person was accepted and justified in the sight of God. And that God accepted such, blessed them, and delighted himself in them, the Bible gives us the most abundant proof, as will be seen in the course of the following remarks and testimonies.

Abel was called, "Righteous Abel," and the apostle testifies, "that by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Heb. 11 : 4. If he was righteous, he cannot have

been in his sins, for a sinful man cannot be a righteous man, and righteousness (because we have no righteousness of our own), cometh through justification. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Justification, as we have shown before, is the consequence or the fruit of the forgiveness of our sins; and the forgiveness of our sins can be obtained only by repentance and a new life, through which we yield ourselves up to the full obedience of the will of God.

But our friend will say, there was no repentance. He claims that under the law there was no regeneration and no spiritual birth, and for this reason no forgiveness, consequently there could be no repentance, and if repentance could have taken place, it would have been altogether useless, because a man will receive no benefit from repentance unless he can obtain the blessings which repentance is intended to confer.

On this subject, however, let us look a little further. We will take the example of our first parents, in the garden of Eden. After they had sinned, they were afraid. The consciousness of their sin or transgression (for sin is the transgression of God's law), filled them with fear, and they fled before God and hid themselves. But God was not willing that his creatures, created in his own image, should thus remain under the dominion of sin, death and the devil, and called them, just as every sinner, now, is called to repentance, "Adam, where art thou?" Not that he did not know where they were, but to humble them, and to bring them to realize their condition. Are you now like unto me? Do you now possess that innocency, that sinlessness in which you were created? No; the consciousness of guilt was upon them, and with fear and, we believe, with a penitent heart, Adam acknowledged and confessed his transgression. He did not in his answer to God, as some say, try to put the fault on Eve, and Eve on the serpent; but they made a true and honest confession, stating the facts just as they had taken place. If they had come to God with a lie on their tongue, as Cain did, they would have found

no mercy. But by honestly confessing their sins and sincerely repenting of them, God, whose chief attribute is mercy, gave them the promise of a Redeemer, a Deliverer, the woman's seed, "which seed," Paul says, "is Christ" They believed God's promise, and thus were justified by faith in the Savior, who was slain from the foundation of the world, and thus by repenting of their sins, and confessing them, and faith in Christ, they received that righteousness which is by faith, of which Paul writes in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. God also clothed them with skins which, no doubt, were obtained from the animals slain in sacrifice, and this is the first shedding of blood of which we have any account, and "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." All sacrifices pointed to the atoning Lamb. May not these garments of skins have been a figure of that wedding garment, Rev. 19 : 8, purchased by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, and which was shed on the cross for all that repent and believe, from Adam unto the end of time? That our first parents did repent of their sins and believe in the promises of God, is most conclusively shown by the fact, that Eve, when Cain, her first son was born, said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." They had accepted the promise, and were already looking forward to its fulfillment, and their hearts were filled with joy in the hope that this might already be the promised one, though he was so far from it that he became the murderer of his own brother. Had they not repented, they could not have been restored to the favor of God; neither could they have received nor enjoyed the promise.

Concerning the spiritual condition of Adam and Eve we have several pointed testimonies from ancient writers which we will here quote. Menno Simon, in his article on "Justification" (Menno's Complete Works, Part 2, Page 261), says, "When Adam and Eve heard these glad tidings of grace, the gospel of peace (that is the promise of a Savior), from the mouth of the Lord, they joyfully accepted and believed it as

the immutable truth of God, anxiously cleaved to it and consoled themselves therewith as a sure foundation of salvation. And thus Adam and Eve were again accepted of God, through Christ Jesus, justified and delivered from the eternal death and curse, for they, according to the promise of God, believed and trusted in him." Dietrich Philip also writes on page 339 as follows: "This is the first proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer and Savior of the world, through whom Adam and Eve were again revived (Jn. 2; 1 Tim. 2) and received the lost image of God; for they were created anew of God, and born anew of him, because they, by true faith, and the power, and enlightening of the Holy Spirit, accepted the gracious promise of the gospel."

According to the Scriptures, it is an utter impossibility to attain to the favor of God without forgiveness of sins, and it is just as impossible to obtain forgiveness of sins without repentance, and the Scriptures acknowledge and require repentance throughout. The Savior says, If the mighty works which had been done in Capernaum, "had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day." Matt. 11 : 23, and if the mighty works which had been done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Matt. 11 : 21, 22. The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, and God spared them. Solomon in his prayer, at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings 8 : 47—50, prays to God, for Israel, that if they should sin ("and there is no man that sinneth not," says he), and afterwards bethink themselves and repent and make supplications and pray unto God, confessing their sins and return to the Lord with all their hearts, "Then," says he, "hear thou their prayer * * * and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee." Job also declares, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42 : 6. The Lord commands the prophet Ezekiel to say unto Israel, "Thus saith the Lord God: Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols," &c. Ezek. 14 : 6. The prophet Joel also declares, "Therefore also

now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning; and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" Joel 2 : 12—14. Even the wicked Ahab humbled himself before the Lord, and the Lord showed so much mercy, that the evil which he had spoken against his house, was reserved until after Ahab's death. 1 Kings 21 : 29.

From the foregoing quotations, and references we see that repentance and forgiveness were not unknown under the Old Dispensation. Many other references and examples might be given but as we have seen that repentance was taught, required and practiced under the Old, as well as under the New Dispensation, we feel that what we have given, is amply sufficient for our present purpose, and will return to our original subject.

Enoch was acceptable to God and was translated, that he should not see death. God took him, and he was not; that is, he was not found upon the earth, for God took him to himself, but before he was translated he had this testimony, that "he pleased God." Gen. 5 : 24; Heb. 11 : 5. Can a man who lives in his sins please God? Or can a man, "walk with God," as the Bible says, Enoch did, and live in his sins? Could God consistently take a man in his sins, without forgiveness, without justification, without sanctification, to himself, or into the abode of the righteous? Is this a Scriptural doctrine? Let the kind reader judge. "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God." By faith he "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. 11 : 7. Now, can a man, impenitent, unforgiven, an unjustified sinner, walk with God, condemn the world and be a preacher of righteousness? And if he was an unjustified and an unforgiven sinner, could he have obtained that saving faith by which he was accounted righteous in the sight of God?

The calling of Abraham, and the experiences of his life, give us an undeniable testimony that the faithful old patriarch, could never have been what the Scriptures prove him to be, if he had not been an accepted and justified child of God. In him was the Scripture fulfilled which saith, "Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, *and he was called the Friend of God.*" Jas. 2 : 23; Gal. 3 : 6.

In Moses we have another of those shining characters, which so gloriously illuminate the pages of sacred history, and who will dare to rise up and say that he was not changed in mind and heart, and that he had not received forgiveness, been accepted and lived in full favor and acceptance with God? We observe in him a more remarkable and decisive change in the course of his life, than is manifested in any other one of the pious patriarchs of that age. It is true, Abraham was obedient to the divine command, and left the parental home, and the association of the sinful and idolatrous world, and went forth not knowing whither he was going, and gives us a most beautiful type of repentance and conversion, of the translation of man from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of light, from the kingdom of unrighteousness, into the kingdom of righteousness. Jacob, fleeing before Esau, his elder brother, after he had obtained of him his birthright, resting his head upon a stone in the dreary wilderness, was led, in a dream, to behold the glories and beauties of another world, to see God revealed to him and the promises to his fathers renewed, "vowed a vow" and consecrated himself to the Lord in a very special and remarkable manner, and was a true and sincere worshiper of the living God, who so signally revealed himself to him upon that and other occasions, which shows that God was with him, and hence Jacob, too, must, by the grace of God, through repentance, have been made a partaker of that righteousness which is obtained by faith in Christ and obedience to the requirements of his law or word.

But the course of Moses, in his turning to God and to

God's people, seems still more remarkable. Moses was the adopted son of the king's daughter. He had reason to esteem her as the preserver of his life; as the instrument in the hands of God through which, he, in his childhood, was rescued from the vengeance of a wicked king. He was reared in the royal palace, educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, possessing a good understanding and a large degree of natural talent, he had before him the brightest prospects of being able to rise high in worldly honor, power and influence. But by the grace of God he was led to esteem all these as of no value, and with an unswerving determination, "when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He was led to see the difference between earthly and heavenly honors, between a perishable and an imperishable crown, and in view of this he would rather be identified with the poor herdsmen and the brickmakers of the land of Goshen, who were then a nation of slaves, despised and under a powerful yoke of oppression, than to live in the palace of the king and enjoy the fullness of a royal board.

This change could not have been brought about by human power alone. A divine influence operated in the heart of Moses and accomplished the work, so that while Moses himself was led to turn to God with a living faith for forgiveness, justification and salvation, he himself became a beautiful type of the Son of God, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12 : 2.

That Moses not only looked forward to the imperishable crown of life, and the rest which remaineth for the people of God, but that he also obtained it, and that already before the death of Christ, is clearly shown by the circumstances connected with the transfiguration (Luke 9 : 28—36), where both

Moses and Elias appeared "*in glory*," * and talked with Jesus of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." And as these two holy men of God were together with Jesus and his disciples on the mountain, they received a token of the divine favor, by being overshadowed by a cloud, and a voice declaring, "This is my beloved Son: hear him." Could we indeed believe that God would have conferred so great a favor on men who were in their sins, and had died in their sins, as to permit them to go on such a mission as these men did, and appear "*in glory*" with the spotless Lamb of God, on an occasion like this? Indeed among the large number of prophets, patriarchs and holy men of old, whose histories are given us in the Scriptures, we have no example of any one, who enjoyed greater privileges, and received higher honors from God than Moses, and we cannot see how any man who is a believer in the truths and doctrines of the Bible, can have the heart to stand up and say that Moses, "to whom God spake as a man to his friend," was an unregenerated man; that he lived and died in his sins, or that he was not moved, and led, and directed by the Holy Spirit. Can any man moved by the Spirit of Christ, write and assert a doctrine so at variance with the plain teachings of both the Old and New Testaments, and the writings of the fathers? It is a matter of the greatest surprise that one who claims to be so strict a Mennonite, the representative of the very strictest sect of the Mennonites, a man who claims that his sect alone deserves, and alone can lay claim to the time-honored name of *Mennonite*, and that all others are corrupt and have departed both from the principles and practices of the Mennonites of earlier days, can advance and hold forth a doctrine, so directly contrary to the teachings of Menno Simon, Dietrich Philip and our oldest confessions of faith.

The man who would be a reformer in the Mennonite

* Of Lazarus, too, we read that he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, where he was "*comforted*." This was also previous to the crucifixion.

Church, or of any other church, should needs possess a better knowledge, both of the word of God and the doctrines of his predecessors whom he professes to follow, than Daniel Musser has evinced in his defense of the views of the Reformed Mennonite Church, respecting the spiritual condition of the people of God before the death of Christ.

The evidence given in God's word, to prove and establish the truth of the belief, that the believers under the Old Dispensation were accepted, forgiven and justified, and that they neither lived nor died in their sins, as Musser claims, are so abundant that both time and space will allow us only to refer briefly to a few more instances.

The offerings and sacrifices under the former dispensation all comprehended within themselves, and were based upon the doctrine of forgiveness. Every transgression required its special sacrifice. And the offering thus made, as God required it, fulfilled the law and satisfied the demand of God, so that he who made the sacrifice remained in favor with God and enjoyed his blessings. The law itself required obedience, and acknowledged no excuse and knew nothing of forgiveness, but the transgressor, being directed by his sacrifice, which was made by the shedding of blood, to the great sacrifice which was to be offered once for all, and accepting and believing the promise of God in reference to this offering, could, through this faith receive pardon and acceptance of God. In the law of offerings and sacrifices, given in the book of Leviticus, we find it distinctly declared, that when an offering was made as required, and the priest made an atonement for him who had transgressed, for the sin which he had committed, then his sin should be forgiven him. Lev. 5 : 10, 16, 18 ; 16 : 30.

That there could be, and was forgiveness of sins under the Old Dispensation, is distinctly shown in the examples of Aaron, David and others. Aaron was High Priest in Israel, chosen to the sacred office by God, but suffered himself with Israel, to be led into the terrible sin of idolatry, and greatly offended God. Moses, in consequence, returned unto God and

prayed for the forgiveness of this sin, and God spared his people, and Aaron continued to be High Priest as he had been before. Can we for a moment entertain the idea that if this sin had been left upon Aaron, he could have acted in the capacity of High Priest of God in Israel, an office in which so many sacred and holy services were required? But as a matter of course, Aaron and all Israel were required to purge and sanctify themselves from their sins.

David was guilty of the double crime of murder and adultery, and greatly sinned against God, but he humbled himself, repented of his sins, prayed for forgiveness, and God heard his prayer, and he enjoyed God's blessing and promise, and was a man of God, as well after his transgression, as before. Likewise when on account of their sins, God determined to overthrow the Ninevites, and commanded Jonah to go and proclaim it throughout their city, when they heard it, they gave heed, proclaimed a fast and repented, and God spared them.

John the baptist preached repentance and baptized with the baptism of repentance, and was ordained of God for this work, as the forerunner of Christ, and was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Luke 1 : 15. How unreasonable it is to think that he could have been in his sins, while in the performance of this solemn work.

When they brought one sick of the palsy to Jesus, he said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," and when Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house; and the woman which was a sinner came weeping, and washing his feet with tears, wiping them with the hairs of her head, kissing them and anointing them with the ointment she had brought, he sharply reproved his host for neglect of his duties and said, concerning this woman "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." Matt. 9 : 2; Luke 7 : 47.

Here we have two plain and undeniable instances of the forgiveness of sins, where sins actually were forgiven, before the death of Christ, which prove to us incontrovertibly that

there was forgiveness of sins under the Old Dispensation as well as under the New. These instances, the reader will remember, though granted by Christ, when upon earth, after his advent in the world, were given, while the Old Dispensation was yet in force, and before Christ had died and made the great atonement for the world, in his own body upon the cross. The New Dispensation was not put in force until after his death and resurrection. A testament has no force while the testator is yet living, but only after he is dead.

It is true that there is a difference in the requirements and practices of the church under the Old and New Dispensations, but the same results were arrived at and the design or purpose was the same, namely, the salvation of man. Under the Old, offerings and sacrifices, and the observing of the judgments, commandments and statutes, given of God, were required, and when these were performed and observed in God's own appointed way, his requirements were fulfilled; he was pleased with his people and his blessings and promises followed, as he declares Lev. 18 : 5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them," and as we also read of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, that "they were both *righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke 1 : 6. Under the New Dispensation, the worship which consisted "only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances," was superceded by the more perfect law, which requires man to worship "him in spirit and in truth." Menno Simon bears us testimony in this when he says, Part 2, Page 77, "The church of the pious is from the beginning; yet, it had not always the same ordinances, nor was it always called by the same name, in the Scriptures."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Old Dispensation was designed for the benefit of God's people, and that the benefits it designed, were given to and enjoyed by those who lived under that dispensation and availed themselves of

it. Any one desiring to avail himself of the blessings and promises of God, was required to believe and to turn to God with a sincere heart, like Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and others as we have shown, and thus they were made acceptable before God through faith in the promised Redeemer, just as we are by faith in a crucified and risen Redeemer. Then if they were made acceptable it must follow that their sins were forgiven, that they were children of God, and that they were fit material from which to form a church; that they were God's church and that they were directed by his Spirit, as will yet hereafter be shown.

CHAPTER XI.

NO CHILDREN OF GOD—NO RECEIVING OF THE HOLY GHOST—NO CHURCH OF GOD.

In the last chapter, we have distinctly and undeniably shown that through faith in the promises of God there was forgiveness of sins under the Old Dispensation, as well as under the New; and the several parts of our subject are so intimately connected with each other, that when we have proved one, all the others must, as a consequence, follow.

Friend Musser claims that there were no children of God, because, to become a child of God, one must be regenerated; and because there was no forgiveness of sins, men could not be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and because the Holy Ghost could not be given unto men, there could be no regeneration and consequently there was no means, by which men could be brought into a union with God and into the relationship of children.

But we have shown that there was forgiveness of sins. Nothing can be more plainly taught in the Word of God, than that there was forgiveness of sins under the former dispensation as well as under the latter. And we propose to show further that believers under the former dispensation not only obtained forgiveness of sins, but that they were also regenerated and that they were united with God in the relationship of children, and that from the very nature of things they could not have occupied any other position.

Forgiveness of sins can only be granted to him who sincerely repents and becomes willing to forsake all that is

opposed to the will of God, and to do all that God commands him to do, trusting alone in the merits of Christ for salvation. When a person, by the grace of God and the co-operating influence of the Holy Spirit, is brought into this state of mind he is converted; he is changed; "he is a new creature; old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new." In the language of the Psalmist (Ps. 40 : 3), "He (God) hath put a new song into his mouth, even praise unto our God." God has given him a new heart, a clean heart, and renewed a right spirit within him (Ps. 51 : 10). Yea, he hath put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4 : 24). He is now no longer under the condemnation of sin, "being justified by faith, having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also," as the apostle says (Rom. 5 : 2), "we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

Now sin, being the transgression of the law of God, is the barrier which separates the unconverted and impenitent from God; as the prophet, Isaiah (59 : 2), says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." Jesus Christ came to suffer and die for sin, and by his death on the cross and the shedding of his precious blood, to take away sin and reconcile us to God (Rom. 5 : 10). Thus Christ has become our peace and our reconciliation, and through him, as Paul says, Eph. 2 : 18—20, both Jews and Gentiles have access by one Spirit unto the Father and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

Now, when the cause which separates two persons from each other is removed they come together. When the enmity which lies between persons or nations is taken away, then there is peace. So when sin is removed between man and God, there is a reconciliation, there is a union; man is brought into

communion with God. The apostle calls this a fellow-citizenship with the household of God. And if we are of the household of God, we must be children of God. See Gal. 3 : 7—9, 14 and 29.

But again, when we are converted and obtain peace with God, and become united with him in the promises of salvation through Jesus Christ, and are renewed in our hearts, and seek to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, then we are regenerated and born again, as the apostle says, 1 Pet 1 : 3, "God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," who "by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10 : 14.

But the adherents of the doctrines of Musser will tell us that all these things are said of those under the gospel dispensation, of those who live and have lived since the death and resurrection of Christ. How shall these things then apply to those who lived before the offering up of Jesus?

Jesus Christ is the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world. He is called the Lamb of God, *slain from the foundation of the world;* and Paul says, Eph. 1 : 3—5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame, before him in love, having *predestinated us to the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

Now, when we carefully investigate the condition of the believers under the law, we find that they confessed their sins, that they repented, that their sins were forgiven, that they were accepted of God and stood in the highest favor, and the most intimate communion with God. This is shown very clearly in the case of Adam and Eve, as seen in the preceding chapter. Abel also was a man, born of the sinful seed of Adam as other men; his nature, as inherited from Adam and Eve, was of the same character as that of Cain.

But Abel is called "righteous Abel," while Cain was a murderer. How did Abel attain to his righteousness? There was only one way, and unless Abel came in that way, he could never have attained that righteousness and been acceptable to God. That way was, to believe the promise of God, repent of his sins, confess them and turn to the Lord with all his heart. And as he was called "righteous Abel" and was acceptable to God, we have an incontrovertible proof that he was both converted and regenerated. And what is said of Abel may, with equal propriety, be said of Enoch, of Noah, of Moses, Abraham and others; indeed, what in this respect is said of one of the believers under the law, may be said, and held of all of them.

Again, if Christ was slain from the foundation of the world, and if we, as the apostle says, were chosen of God, in Christ, from the foundation of the world, to the adoption of children, and both Jews and Gentiles, as shown above, "have access by *one Spirit* unto the Father," and thus become fellow-citizens of the household of faith, then we must conclude that all these believers under the Mosaic Dispensation, not only had the promise that they should be saved when Christ came, but they were then saved through faith in the promise. We nowhere find that God promises to save the believer at some future time. He says, "*Now* is the accepted time, behold, *now* is the day of salvation," and again he says, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." We can find no evidence that God ever said to his people that he could not *now* save them; that they must wait for the accomplishment of certain events; that they must lie bound until the Lion of the tribe of Judah should come and break in sunder the chains of sin, before they could be freed from sin; nay, he declares that from the foundation of the world the plan of salvation was laid, and in his eternal providence, Christ was then already slain, and the full benefits of his death and suffering could be bestowed, and were bestowed to the believers under the law and before the law, as well as to those under the gospel.

God is not limited in his ways and powers as men are. His eternal plan of salvation was so laid, even from the beginning of time, that the great work of human redemption must center in Christ, and so far as God was concerned, salvation could just as well be granted to those who came before Christ, as to those who came afterwards. With God, a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. God is not limited by time, and therefore, with God, the brief space intervening between the creation and the crucifixion could not affect them in the least. The essential point being the acceptance of the proffered mercy.* When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, the promise was not that they should be healed after a time, or after they had reached the land of Canaan; they were healed immediately, and Christ being lifted up for the salvation of the world, could bestow his healing influences to those who believed on him, even before he had suffered. Human law recognizes the virtue of surety-ship, and a man under obligations to the law, and not able to fulfill them, gives a surety, a bondsman who is bound for the fulfillment of the obligation, and the principal, by virtue of his bondsman, is set at liberty. So Christ may be looked upon as the great bondsman of the human race under the former dispensation. Him God could accept, and being held for their sins, believers were set at liberty.

If then, as we have seen from the foregoing, believers under the law, could by virtue of their faith in the promised Redeemer, receive such favors of God as the forgiveness of sins; if they could be brought into that nearness to God which is so boldly set forth in the history of the patriarchs and prophets; if they could be acknowledged as "Righteous," as pleasing to God, as "just" and "walking with God," as perfect, upright and fearing God; then, according to the indisputable testimonies of God's word, we must conclude that they were regenerated, born anew, and possessed in their

* It would be inconsistent with the character of God to offer salvation, when he could not give it.

hearts the full favors of the gospel, and if we accept this conclusion, then they must have stood in the relationship of children of God, and could have occupied no other position, because the Bible speaks only of two classes, of two kingdoms, of two ways. With one or the other of these we must be identified. There is no middle class, and if we are believers, we are of the household of faith, and if we are of the household of faith, then we are children, as the apostle so abundantly shows in his references to the holy men of old, in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews.

We have now seen from the testimonies of the word of God, that believers under the law and before the law, could obtain forgiveness of sins; and consequently they could be regenerated and born again, according to the requirements of the gospel and the words of our Savior. But whence cometh this new birth? By what power is regeneration accomplished?

The new birth is a spiritual birth. The Savior said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Again, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." And further, "that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." Musser, himself, makes this declaration, "It is evident that we become the children of God, by a spiritual birth; but we surely cannot be born of the Spirit without becoming partakers of or possessing the Spirit." This declaration we fully admit, and reasoning from this stand point, it becomes evident, that if believers, under the law, had their sins forgiven and were regenerated, as we have shown above, they must have been born of the Spirit; they must have both been made partakers of and possessed the Spirit. Consequently they must have been cleansed and purified, and in a pure heart the Spirit seeks his dwelling place.

Every man is prompted or moved and led by some power, or motive; some inward, hidden principle, and this hidden or unseen power in man is called the spirit of man. Paul says

(1 Cor. 2 : 11), "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him." Elihu, one of Job's comforters, says "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." And again, "I am full of matter ; the spirit within me constraineth me."

The two great controlling powers under whose guidance and direction all men live, are, First :—The spirit of the world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. This spirit is an enemy to God, and to all that is good. He leads men away from all righteousness and purity into sin and ungodliness. He tempted Eve to take of the forbidden fruit and transgress God's law, that he might destroy the happiness of our first parents and the glory of the creation of God. It was this evil spirit, who has been a deceiver and a liar from the beginning, that led Cain to slay his brother, and it was he who instigated, during all the ages of time, the sin, and shame, and crime that existed in the world, and this is his work still. He goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour ; he transforms himself into an angel of light, that he may deceive the more. His works are summed up by the apostle as the works of the flesh, and consist of "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Secondly.—The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit ; that good Spirit which is sent into the world to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come ; which leads men into all truth, and directs them in paths of purity and holiness, which leads men to bring forth the good fruit of "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law." It was this good Spirit which descended from heaven upon the Savior as he came up out of the Jordan, after his baptism ; it was the

same Spirit that was shed abroad in an especial manner on the day of pentecost,* and empowered the disciples to speak with other tongues, and so preach Christ and him crucified that three thousand souls, that same day, turned away from their sins and from the world, and consecrated themselves unto the service of God. It is this same good Spirit which always dwells with all good people, and directs them in all their ways.

Under the Old Dispensation, these same two elements or principles of good and evil, existed and manifested themselves among the children of men, and men were servants to one or the other, as the apostle says, they were servants to him to whom they yielded themselves servants to obey, "whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

Now, if we pursue the thread of our argument a little further, we will discover how utterly unjust it would be for us, to deny that believers under the Old Dispensation were devoid of the Spirit of God. They were led by one of these two Spirits, and if they were not led by the good Spirit, they must have been led by the evil Spirit. If they were not led by the Spirit of God, they must have been led by the Spirit of darkness. But the word of God bears testimony that they were righteous, just, and God-fearing men, that they were of good

* The outpouring or descending of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, at Jerusalem, immediately after the ascension of Jesus, does not signify or prove, that there was no Holy Ghost previously, for as belonging to the Holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost is co-existent with the Father and the Son, and hence eternal. Neither does it signify nor prove, that the Holy Spirit did not previously dwell with men, as we have already shown, but the Holy Ghost was thus signally poured out, First, to prove the work and commission of the apostles from God. Secondly, to endue them with power from on high—and bestow upon them special gifts. Thirdly, to show forth the fullness and freeness of the Gospel, and that the restrictions which existed under the Mosaic Dispensation, which was especially for the Jews, and not for the Gentiles, were now removed and that God's Spirit should be poured out upon all flesh, without distinction of language or nationality, that whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord, whether Jew or Gentile, should be saved, and that salvation through Jesus Christ should now be preached, and be free to all nations, tongues and people.

report ; that they feared God and eschewed evil ; and it seems to us outright blasphemy to say that such men as the patriarchs and prophets, and the holy men of old, whose glorious examples of goodness, piety, and faithful devotion to God, are a bulwark of strength to every Christian of succeeding ages, did not possess the Spirit of God ; for by saying this, we have only one alternative, and that is, to maintain that these godly men were led, influenced and governed by the Spirit of darkness, by the evil Spirit. Such a conclusion, while the mind revolts at the idea, is entirely contrary to the spirit and tenor of the Scriptures.

When God said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with 'man," we must understand that the Spirit of God was then already given as a guide and director to those who would receive it. But the ungodly and corrupted antediluvians would not be governed by his Spirit ; they would not accept his reproofs. Now it would have been useless for the Spirit to strive with men, when that Spirit could not be given them, or while they could not be made partakers of that Spirit.

David says (Ps. 51 : 11), "Cast me not from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Here we seem to have conclusive and positive evidence that David did possess the Holy Spirit of God. He prayed, not that he might receive him, not that the Spirit should be given to him, but that he should not be taken from him. Had David not possessed the Holy Spirit, he could not have thus prayed.

In the days of Nehemiah, when Israel had returned from their captivity in Babylon and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and the people were assembled, and confessed their sins, and humbled themselves before God, and the Levites made an acknowledgment of God's goodness, in rehearsing what God did for their ancestors, they confessed to God, saying, "Thou gavest also thy *good Spirit to instruct them.*"

The prophet Isaiah, in referring to the children of Israel in the wilderness, says, "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." Stephen, the first Christian Martyr, in his memorable

defense against the Jews, says to them, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always *resist the Holy Ghost;* as your fathers did, so do ye."

When God commanded Moses to appoint seventy elders to assist him in his arduous duties, the Lord said, "Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, * * * and I will come down and talk with thee then, and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee and will put it upon them."

Now, if the Lord gave his Spirit to instruct his people, Israel; if Israel could rebel against, vex and resist the Holy Spirit of God, and if the Lord could take of the Spirit which was upon Moses and put it upon the seventy elders, what further evidence do we need to show that believers, before the advent and suffering of our Savior, also possessed the Holy Ghost?

The apostle tells us that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12 : 3). Peter, before the crucifixion of Christ, when Jesus asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" answered, and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied to him in these comforting words, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." How was this revelation given if not by the Divine Spirit? Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." How could he know this, if it was not revealed to him by the Holy Spirit?

If we take into consideration the incidents connected with the advent of Jesus Christ, we will there alone find evidence sufficient to establish, beyond controversy, the fact that the Holy Ghost dwelt in and with the believers before the death of Christ, as well as after, to which the apostle Peter also bears testimony when he says, 1 Pet. 1 : 10—12. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or in what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ which was in them* did signify, when it testified

beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Of John the baptist it was said, "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." "He shall go before him in the Spirit and power of Elias," &c. If John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his childhood, and went forth in the Spirit of Elias, then Elias too, who lived under the Old Dispensation, under the law of Moses, must have possessed the same Spirit, i. e., the Holy Ghost. Nothing can be plainer.

The Holy Ghost came upon Mary the mother of Jesus, and when she came to Elizabeth the mother of John, and saluted her, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." Zacharias, after the birth of John, when the child was named, and his tongue, which had been bound many months, was loosed, and he spake again and praised God, "he was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied." Simeon was a just and devout man, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him, and it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ, and being led by the Spirit, he came into the Temple, at the time when the parents of Jesus brought in the child, to do for him after the custom of the law, and took up the child and blessed God, and desired to depart in peace to his reward, for, says he, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The Holy Spirit revealed to him, also, that this was the Lord's Christ.

We shall leave this part of our subject here. We find the evidence of Scripture, proving the work of the Holy Spirit in the believers under the former dispensation, so abundant, that we can only present our readers with a very limited part of them. We have only opened up the subject, and leave our readers, who have time and inclination to do so, to pursue it further at leisure, though we have said enough fully and clearly to establish our position, and that is all that is necessary for our present purpose.

Finally, we come to consider the assertion of D. Musser, that *there was no Church of God* previous to the formation of the Apostolic Church on the day of Pentecost. The incorrectness and inconsistency of this assertion becomes evident from the conclusions arrived at under the three preceding heads. We will remember that Musser asserts, that the reason why God did not form a church under the former dispensation was, because there was no proper material from which to build such a structure.

But we have seen that men from the beginning could and did repent, and that they obtained forgiveness of sins, and were brought into favor with God, and into the most intimate relations, and fellowship with him; that they, through grace, by faith in the promises of God, were renewed in their hearts and regenerated, and that they possessed the Holy Ghost, and in every sense of the word, were brought, by that divine Spirit, into the relationship of the children of God. Hence, if there was no church of God, before the day of Pentecost, when the first Apostolic Church was formed, it must have been for some other reason, and not because there was no proper material from which to form it.

But we assert that the first church of God, on earth, was formed with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and this is the view which has always been held by the Mennonite Church. Musser admits that the relation existing between God and man in the garden of Eden, was such, that it would seem to favor or countenance the idea that it might be called a church. The relationship of a church of God, was sundered, however, when Adam and Eve transgressed and fell. But as soon as God promised that Savior, who should bruise the serpent's head, and they confessed their sins and accepted this promise, they were restored to his favor; that which through Adam's transgression was lost, was, through faith in the promise restored to them; and the relationship of a church was re-established, and this relation of a church of God has been maintained even to this day, and will be maintained to the end of time.

The kind reader has no doubt already perceived, from the evidence given, that the church of God is composed of the true worshipers or faithful children of God. The church was designed to embrace under her privileges and favors, all who fear God and walk according to the requirements of his law, in whatever age of the world they may have lived. God chose to reveal himself to his people in different ways and by different means (Heb. 1 : 1), and to give them such commandments and laws, and require of them the performance of such duties as he, in his infinite love and wisdom, had designed for their happiness, and as long as men lived in accordance with his revealed will, they were acceptable to him and he performed unto them his promises. Now this defines unto us exactly what the church is, and the relation in which the church stands with God.

Man was created for society. God saw that it was not good for him to be alone, and this is true with reference to his moral and spiritual relations, as well as his natural or physical life. To govern him in all his relations, God gave him wise and good laws. But as the life and the happiness of the soul is far superior to the life of the body, so the laws given to man for his spiritual welfare, are of much greater importance than those which govern his social relations, yet he who lives in accordance with the laws of God, given for his spiritual welfare, must not disregard the less important ones, given for his physical and social welfare. To live right we must have respect to all God's laws, whether for our physical, social or spiritual welfare. Now when men thus fear God and obey all his laws and commandments, they are accepted of him. Acts 10 : 35 ; Eccl. 12 : 13. And from this acceptance comes the relationship of the church, however small their number may be. Thus Adam and Eve by accepting their salvation, through the promises of God, after the fall, were re-instated into the relationship of a church, though they were but two in number. The Savior declares that " Where two or three are gathered together in his name there will he be in the midst of

them." Abel became a member of this church and so did Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Lot and the whole line of patriarchs and prophets in the succeeding ages.

God, from time to time, revealed himself to them, gave them such instructions and laws and commandments as he deemed necessary; he renewed his promises to them, made covenants with them, and bestowed blessings upon them; they accepted, loved, feared, honored and obeyed him; they were his people and he was their God, and thus they stood in the relation of a church. This is just what the Christian Church is admitted to be at the present day, viz., "a number or a congregation of believers in Christ, united together in the order of the gospel." Those living before Christ were under the order of the former dispensation, and as that embraced what God required of them, they were just as much his church, as those under the gospel, though they may not have been called by the same name. It is not the name that makes the church, but the relation men sustain to God. The assertions of Musser that there was no church of God before Christ, because God did not call his people a church, or that they were not his children, because he did not call them children, have no bearing in the matter whatever. They are simply misapprehensions of his word, and prove nothing. God speaks of those under the former dispensation as "his people," "his peculiar people," "the congregation of Israel," "the congregation of the Lord," and David calls them, "the great congregation," &c. Stephen calls them the *church in the wilderness*. The Greek word from which the word *church*, in this passage, is translated is, *ecclesia*, and this is said, by Greek scholars, to be the word that is translated *church*, in our English translation of the New Testament. The same word occurs in the Greek translation of the Old Testament and is translated *congregation* or *assembly*. In the German translation of both the Old and New Testaments, the word given as *congregation* in the English translation, is, we believe,

invariably given, *Gemeine;* and *Gemeine*, in German, has the same signification as *church* in English.

Now if the word *ecclesia* is used in Greek, both in the Old and New Testaments, and means *church* and is so translated in the New Testament, it must mean the same thing in the Old Testament. This would clearly establish the fact that Musser's assertion, that God did not call his people a church, is incorrect, and would confirm the words of Stephen, when he (Acts 7 : 38) calls the same people, *the church in the wilderness.* The German translation of the Bible gives us a corroborative evidence of the same fact.

As a further proof that God esteemed his "peculiar people" and believers before them, as his church, we may refer to the words of Paul (Rom. 11), where he speaks of the Jews of that day as the natural branches of the Olive tree, which branches were broken off, because of unbelief ; and the Gentiles, as branches of the wild Olive tree, were graffed into the good Olive tree. This good Olive tree represents the church from the beginning, grounded and rooted in God, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." And if the Gentiles were graffed into the good Olive tree, that is, they became part of this first, original church, then this first, original church, must have been a true church, and so considered before the Lord.

Again, those of the household of faith under the gospel, are called, "the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3 : 7—9), and are said to be blessed with him. The apostle also speaks of the blessing of Abraham coming "on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Here then we see that the grace and salvation bestowed upon the Gentiles as well as upon the Jewish believers, are called, the *blessing of Abraham*, and that this came through Jesus Christ. Then the blessing of Abraham must have been the full and free favor of the gospel, and hence if those under the gospel composed a church, Abraham

and his seed must have constituted a part of the same church. In Gal. 3 : 29 the apostle says, "If ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Where can we find words, or evidences to establish more plainly and indisputably the fact that the church of God did exist from the beginning of time, and we add, the church militant on earth, being gathered into the church triumphant in heaven, shall endure forever?

As confirming the foregoing views we will here add a few extracts from the writings of Henry Funk, to whose work we have already referred in the preceding pages. In the edition of 1763, page 8, he says, "And in this manner, the dragon, the old serpent, through such wise and learned men, has, *from the beginning*, persecuted, pursued and imprisoned, and with gallows, fire, water, sword and various instruments, murdered and killed many thousands of the servants and *children of God*. See Heb. 11 : 36–38."

On page 11, referring to the penalties which Adam had brought upon himself and his posterity by his transgression, he writes as follows, "This was laid upon man as a punishment from God, but the love of God was there as an amelioration of the punishment, for God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, and clothed them to comfort them [and as a token] that he would again clothe them with the robe of righteousness through the promised Savior."

On page 14, he writes further, "Christ was promised, again to release man from the devil and the sins of Adam and Eve, and again to secure unto him eternal salvation. Eph. 1 : 20 ; 2 : 14 ; Heb. 9 : 12. To this redemption, God in his love, both in the law and through the prophets, gave beautiful promises and types, that believers should be changed again after the image of God, with heavenly glory, in his eternal kingdom."

On page 16 we find these remarks, "We see throughout how that believers are justified through Christ, and not by their own merits through the law. Here then consider the

matter well ; our first parents, Adam and Eve, were clothed on their outward person, by God himself, with coats of skins ; but the *inner man was clothed with life, holiness and righteousness*, by Jesus Christ, who is also truly God. And when the Lord Almighty, the Almighty God will again appear in his great day, then he will change (or clothe upon with his own glory and heavenly joy) in all his, both the inward and the outward man, in one body, into one." Phil. 3 : 21.

Again on page 17, we read, "Thus we see, in the 4th chapter (Genesis), 26th verse, that Seth had a son whose name was Enos and that, in that time, men began to preach*of the name of the Lord. Of what Lord's name was preached is sufficiently dent ; that is they preached of the great and mighty name of the Almighty Lord of lords. By whom this preaching of the name of the Lord was done is also evident, namely, through the *Spirit of God*, as we may see, Gen. 6 : 3 ; where God laments that men would no longer hear the reproofs of his Spirit. Through whom, however, did the Spirit of God preach ? Through the *children of God* and such as had found grace with God (Gen. 6 : 8), but what they preached of the name of the Lord, Moses does not so clearly state, though the word of God gives it plainly enough in other parts, namely, that men should fear God, love him, be subject and obedient to him, according to the word which, in the name of the Lord, through the Spirit of God, and through the servants of God, was spoken ; and if they did this, it *should be well with them.* See Leviticus 26 : 3 ; Deut. 28 : 1. But if men would not be reproved, nor allow themselves to be governed by the Word and Spirit of God, they should be punished. Gen. 6 : 7 ; Lev. 26 : 14 ; Deut. 28 : 15. Thus we may also believe, that God in his love, in the days of Seth, had preached of the Lord and of His name, through His Spirit, that men should be redeemed, by the Lord, from death, into which they,

* German translation. The English translation says, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." But our author here writes in accordance with the idea conveyed in the German.

with their father Adam, had fallen ; and that in the name of the Lord, all they who believed it, should receive *forgiveness of sins*, eternal life and the eternal kingdom.

On page 19, in speaking of the ark, he says, "And since the window was in the upper part of the ark, we may believe that in the upper part of the ark there was more light than in the middle part, and in the middle part more than in the lower part. Thus as the Holy Scriptures show, the light of the Gospel of salvation, through Jesus Christ, so full of comfort, *gave light to the first from the beginning*, in the preaching of the name of the Lord, through the Spirit of God, and those who believed in it, obtained grace with God, as Noah and others before him."

On page 20, he further says, concerning the typical representations of the ark, "Thus it is the will of God that all men should come to him, into the ark and church of his testament, that they may be preserved from the dreadful destruction of this world, and as the ark had three floors, and on the three floors the creatures were preserved, so God in the three periods of the world, *had the believers of His church*, of His testament, of His blood, through which He redeemed them, and these will He also preserve, in the ark of His church from the terrible destruction of the wicked."

On page 21 we find also the following remarks. "Abraham received the sign of circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith. Thus the outward circumcision was a sign of the circumcision of the heart, by which Abraham was circumcised, by faith in obedience to God, which was accounted to him for righteousness. Thus Abraham was first circumcised *inwardly*, with the spiritual circumcision of the heart in the *putting away of sin*, and for this purpose came Jesus, to give us the true circumcision, which is the fulfillment of the circumcision of Abraham." John 5 : 2. * * * "Abraham, the father of the faithful had two circumcisions, the circumcision of the heart by faith, and the circumcision of the flesh in his body. The circumcision of the heart was

made spiritually, through Christ." Again (page 22) he says, "With what, however, shall this circumcision be made? With the knife of stone of the Rock, Jesus Christ, through faith in his name, through which the purification and the *forgiveness of sin is obtained.* In this manner was the circumcision of Abraham from the Lord."

We will leave this part of our subject here. We might say much more. The evidences in support of our views, and the doctrines we maintain, are abundant, and we have by no means exhausted them. We might yet produce many passages from Scripture, to which our limits do not allow even an allusion, while Detrich Philip, Menno Simon and other writers, give us abundant testimony, to which we have only made a very slight reference. The whole subject has, however, we believe, been presented in such a manner, that the impartial reader will be able, very readily to discern between the right and the wrong, and thus decide the question for himself.

CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF DANIEL MUSSER WITH REMARKS—ACCOUNT OF THE VISIT OF BENJAMIN AND AMOS HERR TO DANIEL MUSSER, &c.

In addition to the extracts given from the writings of Daniel Musser, in the preceding parts of this work, we will here further present to the consideration of the reader the following, a portion of which however, has already been given on pages 18 and 19.

On page 283 of his work, he says, "The carnal works which I have spoken of as having learned by tradition, I have from so many sources, and from such authority, that I *cannot help but believe* it to be true. The whole church and the world knew of their existence, and yet they were suffered to exist from year to year, for several generations. The carnal conduct which Kauffman, Landis and Herr speak of, was well known to every one who chose to acquaint themselves with it; yet their ministers tolerated them as members and admitted them to communion."

On page 284 he says, "The truth is, there was no evidence of life here, amongst either teachers or lay-members. In my youth I was considerably amongst them, and *all I ever* heard was light, carnal conversation about the world and worldly things." Further, on the same page, he says, "There are yet people living (and of their own members too), who *know* that drinking to excess, revelry, strife and envying were very common amongst members of the church; and that their

church generally (ministers amongst the rest), knew it and no notice was taken of it."

Again on page 284—5, speaking of the Old Mennonite Church, he says, "I freely bear testimony to the moral worth, good citizenship, kindness, benevolence, and general worthiness, of many of their members; for whom I have a very high esteem, and would on no account wantonly grieve or wound their feelings. And why should they be grieved? *I conscientiously believe it to be true*, and if I am in error, I beg of them to convince me by the word of God, and *I will freely retract.* But I believe it my duty to vindicate the truth, and I beg of every one to divest themselves of all prejudice and partiality, and consider the matter in the fear of the Lord. *I have made no assertion lightly*, and without due consideration, and am willing to bear the consequences. * * * * * * I myself, know of different persons, who were commonly reported at the time as addicted to drunkenness, and also seen them intoxicated, Yet they *were members till their death;* and to my own *certain knowledge*, their habits were well known to the preachers."

We have given these extracts here, in order to bring them up fresh to the mind of the reader, so that he may be better able to compare them with that which follows; and to show still more clearly, how little truth there is in these assertions and accusations, and what evidence Daniel Musser had to believe them as true, and upon what grounds he was willing to bear the consequences of his assertions (and we hold all equally responsible who heard the manuscript read and approved of it), we will give the reader an account of a visit which Bishop Benjamin and Preacher Amos Herr made to Daniel Musser and the interview they had with him.

Daniel Musser had sent word to the above mentioned brethren that he wished to see them. This was in the latter part of December 1876, some time previous to his death. The brethren went. When they came into the room where he was,

he received them in a very friendly manner, and said, he had been looking for them for some time.

After some formal conversation he said, that he had heard, that they accused him of having published some things in his book which were not true.* They replied, that they supposed he thought they were true.

He then began to tell them some of the faults of the church. The brethren told him, they had not come to have a controversy, but to pay him a friendly visit. He however continued to bring charges against, and find fault with some of the members of their church. They replied to him that their church (that is, the Old Mennonite Church) always had shortcoming members, and that they had them yet, and that none of us were any better than we ought to be. He assented that no one was.

Friend Musser then brought a charge of intemperance against a man who had been living a neighbor to both of the brethren, and whom they had known from their earliest recollections. One of them having lived on the adjoining farm for thirteen years and had continual intercourse with him, exchanging work with him in harvest, and at other times, and though, like all others at that time, he would take his drink, neither of them had ever seen him intoxicated. Since then they also made inquiries of a man who was raised by this brother, whether he had ever seen him intoxicated. He said, "*Never*. But he would take a drink sometimes."

* One of these ministers (Amos Herr), a short time before D. Musser sent for the brethren, in a conversation with John Kohr, the successor of D. Musser, in the office of bishop of the Reformed Mennonite Church, in speaking of D. Musser's book, said, There were many things in that book that were not correct. Friend Kohr replied, that D. Musser had said to him, that he was surprised that Amos Herr and his brother did not know that what he wrote in his book was true.† Bro. Herr said, They knew it was not true. Hence the reason that D. Musser sent for them.

† In a letter to the author, Friend Kohr gives this expression of D. Musser's very different, and as though it had been made by D. Musser after their interview, which is incorrect and so admitted by Friend Kohr.

Then he brought another charge of the same kind against another man, who, he said, was a member of our church and had a great deal to say about him. The brethren told him that this man had been expelled, from the church for a period of at least twenty years previous to his death (and probably before Daniel Musser came to Lancaster County). Musser replied that he *thought* the man *had* been a member up to the time of his death, and would hardly be convinced that it was not so, for he had been told by some one that the man did go to communion. But the brethren knew that their assertions were correct and that his expulsion from the church was a positive fact. One of them had seen him in a condition that was not becoming to a member, and made inquiries of the bishop of the district about him; and the bishop himself told him that he was not a member and had been expelled many years before. Other members also, living at this time, know this to be a fact.

He then brought a third charge of intemperance against another person, which was correct so far as the charge of intemperance was concerned. But this person also had been expelled from the church and stood so for many years. Afterwards he reformed and made application to be again received into the church, but was suddenly stricken down by the hand of death before his desire was accomplished.

He then brought another charge against one of our ministers, who had been dead some years. This greatly surprised the brethren. They had known him and had heard him preach from their earliest recollections, and never had they seen or heard anything to warrant the belief that he was intemperate. He took his drink like all others in those days, but after the most diligent inquiry, not one person could be found who knew of him having been intoxicated. Both these brethren, as well as Daniel Musser himself, after this visit, made every effort to find evidence concerning his intemperance, but neither Musser nor they found the slightest proof that he had ever been intoxicated. Some of those men of whom D. Musser made

inquiries and for whom he had sent to obtain proof of the charge, afterwards spoke to the Herr's about it; said, they were surprised to hear the charge, and told D. Musser so; they had never heard of it before. This was the same minister whom Musser, in his book (page 240), charges with having voted twice at the same election, but these brethren being well acquainted with the character of the man, and having at hand the strongest and most irreproachable testimony, stand ready to prove that he never even attended an election during the time that he was in the ministry. They challenged Musser's friends to prove the assertion, but they were unable to bring the slightest evidence of the truth of the charge. Some of the oldest men of the neighborhood, some eighty and ninety years old, do not know of him ever having been at the polls, after he had been ordained to the ministry.*

Musser then brought a charge of intemperance against another minister, who, upon one occasion became intoxicated. The brethren told him, they knew nothing about this case. Musser then said himself, that this minister was expelled and never again received into the church. We also have other evidence to corroborate the fact that this minister was promptly expelled for his transgression, but as Musser himself admitted it, we have no need of any further proof.

Musser also charged one of the members of our church with having taken part at a political meeting. The brethren told him, if he had done so, he had transgressed the rules of Conference. This rule, that no member shall take part at political meetings, is an established rule in all the Conferences of the Old Mennonite Church throughout the United States, as far as we know, and has been for a long time.

Friend Musser also related, how he had lived with his uncle (who was an Old Mennonite) a long time, and had never

* Hon. John Strohm, of Lancaster County, now in his eighty-sixth year, says, He knew this minister personally since 1805, and never heard of him having been at the election, and was surprised at the charge. He also never heard him charged with intemperance.

seen his uncle pray, except the silent prayer at the table; from which he concluded that our people were not a praying people. The brethren told him that our members were taught to pray, not pharisee-like, in public, but privately, and to exercise themselves in secret prayer, both before retiring and upon rising up.

Several other members were also charged with minor transgressions, but these were the principal points that were brought up in the conversation of the brethren with Daniel Musser at this interview, though some other conversation of minor inportance passed between them, which however it is not necessary here to insert.

One of the brethren then said to D. Musser, "And with these charges and accusations you condemn the whole Mennonite Church, in the United States and Canada, and hold them dead beyond repentance?" He replied, "Not individually, but as a body." The brethren then told him, that they had seen a number of the oldest ministers from the different localities in the United States and Canada, and made it a point to ask them, if ever they knew or heard of a time that the church was as represented by his book. They all said, "Never," and were surprised that any person should make such a charge. To this D. Musser replied, that he "guessed they were."

The brethren then said to D. Musser, If they would publish to the world all that had taken place in the Reformed Mennonite Church, since its organization, not of hear-say, but what they could prove as facts, what a chapter it would make! To this he made no reply.

The brethren then told him they wished him all that they wished themselves, and as they bid him "Farewell," they remarked, "The Old Year has almost passed away, and Oh, that with it all evil surmisings and uncharitableness might pass away, and as the New Year is ushered in, love, charity, peace and newness of life might dwell in all our hearts." D. Musser replied, "No man living, wishes it more than I do." One of

the deacons of the Reformed Mennonite Church was present during the interview and heard all that was said.

The reader will observe that in the quotations given from Musser's writings, no names are mentioned in connection with the charges made, neither does he mention any names anywhere in the book in connection with the accusations which he brings against the church; but at this interview with the brethren, he mentioned the names of the persons to whom he had reference, and from whose actions he drew his conclusions as given in the book. Had the brethren not visited him and learned from his own lips the names of the persons thus referred to, it would no doubt have remained a mystery which we should never have been able to clear up. But now, that the names of the persons have been made known to the brethren, we find that of the five charges of intemperance, which he produced, three were persons who had once been members, but were expelled, and never again received back, while the other two were men of such unblamable character that we most unhesitatingly challenge them to produce a single shadow of evidence in proof of their accusations.

In reference to the minister against whom Musser brings the charge of intemperance and of voting twice at the same election, his mind was evidently disturbed a good deal, after the brethren had visited him. The following week another of our brethren (Bro. L——), visited Doctor Musser (as he was familiarly called, being a physician by profession), and in a friendly conversation he asked Bro. L—— whether he was acquainted with this minister. "O yes, very well," said Bro. L——; "he was often at my father's house." Dr. Musser then asked the brother whether he had ever heard of him as drinking too much. "Ey!" answered Bro. L—— (they were conversing together in the Pennsylvania dialect), "Ich hab my Lebe noch nicks so g'hoert.—Ich hab g'meent er is so een feiner Mann g'west." "Why, I never in my life heard any such thing. I always thought he was such a fine man." To this Musser replied, "Ey, des is was die Herre aw g'saat hen;

des kommt mir fremm vor. Der Mann der mir's g'saat hot, hot g'saat er het ihn oft so g'sehne." "Why, this is what the Herr's said, too; this seems strange to me. The man who told me, said he had often seen him in this condition." *

How sad it seems that any one should make such grave charges against his fellow-man upon such uncertain and incorrect evidences, as we have seen that Friend Musser has done, and that he should venture, upon these evidences, to make the remarks, that he "conscientiously believes them to be true;" "that he cannot help to believe it to be true;" that he *knows* them to be true, and that he is "willing to bear the consequences." We feel to pray, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," and "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Daniel Musser also made the expression to Bro. L——, "Und sel Buch—ich hab's net schreibe wolle; aber die Brueder hen mir ka Ruh' g'lust bis ich's g'schriebe hab." "And that book—I did not want to write it, but the brethren would not let me rest until I wrote it."

Friend John Kohr, to whom reference has already been made, on a preceding page, in a letter to the author, written in October 1877, severely criticises our remarks on the foregoing expression, as given in our article, published in the Herald of Truth, September 1877, and denies it as altogether improbable and untrue. We are free to acknowledge that our information at that time, in the form of the expression, was not altogether correct, and whenever we are made conscious of any error that we have made, we are willing to correct it. We do

* In our account of this conversation between D. Musser and Bro. L——, as given in the Herald of Truth, the expressions which passed between them were not given quite correctly. To avoid any further mistakes or misconstruction, we give them here in the original language in which they were spoken. We had also erroneously said that this charge had been made against a bishop. We should have said, *minister*, as given in these pages. Musser named this minister to the brethren Herr, and charged him with intemperance and voting twice at the same election. He also named the minister to Bro. L——.

not wish to do any one the remotest injustice, or to make the slightest misrepresentation ; but after all, the substance of the expression as presented in that article, was substantially the same as that given here. The expression that he was told, that he had better never written that book, was, as it seems, incorrect, and it now appears, that without any reproof or prompting by the brother who visited him, he voluntarily and of his own accord, said, *that he did not want to write the book*, which makes it all the more forcible and gives us only a clearer evidence of the feelings of his mind.

Friend Kohr also claims that Daniel Musser was not persuaded to write the book, but that it was his own free and voluntary work, and says in his letter, " That if any man will read his (Musser's) book, he will clearly see that D. Musser has written his own sentiments and not the sentiments of others." That he did not write his own sentiments, we never questioned or asserted, but we cannot help remarking here, that while Friend Kohr claims that D. Musser here wrote his own sentiments, and not the sentiments of others, he also positively asserts that he having read D. Musser's manuscript, before it was printed, " approved of it " and does so yet ; and says, that as far as he knows, every one (that means we suppose every one in his church), " looks upon it as containing *sound gospel* doctrine, and believes it to be a very useful book." He also makes the assertion that any member of his church, who would reject the doctrines contained in the book, would be rejecting *sound gospel doctrine* and that would expel him from the church. Here it would seem after all as though Friend Kohr was trying to make it appear that the sentiments, written by Daniel Musser, were the sentiments of the church, and that the church would restrict *all* her membership to the doctrines contained in the book, and this, we have no doubt is the case. Consequently, had even Daniel Musser, as a member of the church, though a prominent man and a bishop, entertained and written a different doctrine, he, according to the sentiments of Friend Kohr, would have subjected

himself to expulsion and the ban. With this view of the subject, who, after all, can positively say that Daniel Musser did write his own sentiments and not the sentiments of others? Besides we have positive evidence that the manuscripts of D. Musser's book were read before the church, before being printed, which confirm our views as given above, and thus, after all, whatever his own sentiments may have been, he could only write what the church would approve. And in this very thing we hold that the Reformed Church exercises an unscriptural sovereignty or dominion over her membership which the apostle condemns (1 Pet. 5 : 3), where he admonishes the Elders not to be "lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." The gospel rule is *love*, not human authority, or compulsion. The service of the Lord is a voluntary service and not a servile bondage, and if the Reformed Mennonite Church is able to hold her entire membership under the belief that all that is written in Daniel Musser's book is true, and sound gospel doctrine, whether she does it by gaining the voluntary assent of her people through her teachings, or by fear of church censure and the ban, she shows herself in a far more deplorable and a far less hopeful condition than we have imagined.

When we further take into consideration the fact that Daniel Musser made such diligent inquiry concerning the character of some of the men to whom he had reference in the statements made in his book, not only of Bro. L——, but also of others, which fact John Kohr, in the letter referred to above, himself admits, it appears very evident that his mind was more or less exercised in reference to the matter, and that after all, he wished to have some more substantial evidence to satisfy himself, and when he found none, it is only reasonable to suppose, if he was sincere and conscientious, that it would cause him still more disquietude of mind, and when we take the positive evidence of Bro. L——, to the fact that he did voluntarily say, *he did not want to write the book* but was *pursuaded* to the undertaking by his brethren, it shows itself

only the more incontrovertibly that his mind was not fully at ease about the matter.

If there should be any doubt concerning the testimony of Bro. L——, or if in any way his testimony should be disputed or looked upon as improbable (which indeed is the case, as we have above seen from Friend Kohr's letter), then we would simply refer the reader to D. Musser's own words, as given in the preface of his book, where he no doubt (if the work, according to the claims of Kohr, is the free and voluntary production of his own mind), writes the true sentiments of his heart, and says almost identically, if not in words, yet in substance, the same thing. Here are his words: "The idea of such an undertaking never occurred to me, until it was suggested to me by others, to whose *solicitations* I was induced to accede." "This desire seemed so reasonable, and I may say, commendable, that I felt myself *constrained* to endeavor to gratify it to the extent of my ability."

Here he confesses that the idea of writing the book never entered his mind until it was suggested to him by others, and then it was only upon their solicitations, their desire, that he was induced to accede to their wishes.

CHAPTER XIII.

SELF-EXALTATION—EXTRACTS FROM BISHOP CHRISTIAN HERR'S (PEQUEA) LETTER TO JOHN HERR, &C.

"For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 14 : 11.

"Be not high-minded, but fear." Rom. 11 : 20.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10 : 12.

"For I say unto you, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Rom. 12 : 3.

Of the various forms in which pride manifests itself, that of self-exaltation, that through which a man lifts himself up in his own opinion, through which he is led to esteem himself better than others, and to assume for himself a position, powers, virtues, gifts, favors and prerogatives above his fellows, and to boast of them while he despises others—is one of the worst in its manifestations and the most difficult to eradicate.

This spirit manifested itself very pointedlly in the conduct of the Jewish leaders, the Scribes and Pharisees. They esteemed themselves righteous above others ; they were full of pride and self-conceit ; they boasted that they were Abraham's seed, children of the promise, heirs of the kingdom and never in bondage to any man ; they thought themselves a great deal better than the publicans, the Samaritans or others who were not of their nation, caste, or sect, and they could have no dealings and no intercourse with them, as is shown very plainly from

the prayer of the Pharisee in the Temple, Luke 18 : 10–14 ; in the accusation brought against the Savior, that he was the "friend of publicans and sinners," Matt. 11 : 19 ; in the charge that he received sinners and sat down with them to meat, Luke 19 : 7 ; 15 : 2 ; Matt. 9 : 10 ; Mark 2 : 15, and in his conversation with the woman of Samaria, Jn. 4 : 9. They themselves could have no dealings with these classes, and if any one should go so far as to have intercourse, or associate with them, he was condemned as one unfit for their society and excluded from their communion.

Jesus however reproves this spirit of self-righteousness and self-exaltation in the severest terms, and regardless of their traditions, he did eat with publicans and sinners at common meals, but observed the Passover with his disciples only. He knew the law and observed it. Please read the twelfth chapter of Deuteronomy. He declares that the publican, who appeared so mean and unworthy in the eyes of the proud Pharisee, in the temple, "went down to his house justified rather than the other," and many others whom the Scribes and Pharisees despised and looked upon as unworthy, received the highest favors and the most comforting approbation of our Savior's love toward a fallen and sinful race, because they humbled themselves before him, believed in his name, accepted the teachings of his word, and became his faithful followers.

These self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, however, gave way more and more to their prejudices, the fruit of self conceit and self-righteousness; and these prejudices developing themselves in hatred, their hatred soon manifested itself in acts of open violence, and they sought to lay hands on Jesus, to stone him, and finally, when his hour was come, they took him, condemned him and crucified him, and herein we see the great danger to which, those who give way to this spirit of self-exaltation, self-righteousness, and condemning others, expose themselves.

In the earlier ages of Christianity, this spirit of pride and

self-exaltation developed itself in a different form from that of the present day. When men fell into the delusion that they alone were right, and all others were wrong, that all who did not agree with them, were the enemies of God and consequently their enemies, they permitted their prejudices to overrule their reason and resorted to acts of violence, and sought not only to set themselves above others in their self-conceit and self-righteousness, but also pursued, and with prison and torture, with fire and sword and other means, persecuted and put to death those who, in accordance with the teachings of the Savior, sought to worship God in "spirit and in truth," though it was in the way, which according to the words of Paul, "*they called heresy.*"

This spirit manifested itself continually, all along down through the history of the church and raged with fearful violence for many centuries, during which the faithful followers of Jesus were compelled to suffer the most indescribable horrors, trials and bodily afflictions, and thousands upon thousands were cruelly slain, and suffered the most agonizing deaths, because they would not deny their faith in Christ, nor fall down to worship the idols which their self-righteous and deluded persecutors had set up, and thus was literally fulfilled what the Savior declared to His disciples, when he said, Jn. 16: 2–3, "The time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service, and these things they will do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me."

In more modern times, however, as we have before stated, this spirit has assumed a different form of development, especially in our own country, and among those with whom we, at this time have more directly to do. Though we still occasionally hear from other portions of the world, that there are localities, where the gospel cannot be preached in its purity without restraint, and where men for the sake of religion, are yet at this day, compelled to suffer imprisonment, banishment and other forms of persecution.

The most prominent form, however, in which this spirit of

self-righteousness and self-exaltation develops itself, is, in originating and multiplying sects, each claiming that they are the only true church of God, that all others are in error, and that they alone are right, and this has been the source of a great deal of wrong. Thereby divisions have been caused, controversy has been awakened, bitter feelings, variance, strife, envy, hatred, false accusations, misrepresentations of character and doctrine, evil surmising and malignings, unjust condemnations and judgments have been passed, in direct opposition to the teachings of Christ, for He commands His followers that they should not judge, that they may not be judged, neither condemn, that they may not be condemned. Matt. 7 : 1 ; Luke 6 : 37. He also declares that, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Matt. 18 : 6–7.

Of this originating and multiplying of sects and the development of this spirit of self-righteousness and self-exaltation, we have, in our day, a number of striking examples, one of the most prominent of which, it appears to us, is the Reformed Mennonite Church, which forms the principal subject of this work, and with whose history, characteristics and claims, the reader has, already, to a large extent become acquainted. How this spirit of self-exaltation, has especially manifested itself among this sect, and in what light the ministers of that day considered it, is further illustrated by the following extracts from the letter written by Bish. Christian Herr (Pequea), to John Herr, to which reference has already been made in a former part of this work.

EXTRACT FROM CHRISTIAN HERR'S LETTER TO JOHN HERR.

"With these two passages last quoted from the fifth chapter of your book you go on as though you had proved that the Mennonite Church was given to all these terrible sins and abominations, as shown in the passages previously referred to, and as though they suffered all these things without reproof,

and thus, as already said, it is very evident that you do not abide in the truth. You wish, however, to appeal to their works, and thus set up yourself as a judge over the Mennonite Church, and thus, as it were, prescribe for the administrators of civil law, how they shall hold this disgraceful fornicatress (to which you compare her). Alas to what may not this fiery zeal and hurtful party-spirit lead a poor worm of the earth."

"On page 242, you call the ministers of the Old Mennonite Church 'Deceivers,' because they endeavor with subtlety to corrupt the Scriptures, for the purpose of defending their carnal church. On page 241, you say, 'Thus also here, when truly faithful and God-seeking souls are in this, or any other impure church,' &c., and on pages 194 and 195 you say, 'O God, is it not a mournful error that we find so few in our time who are not guilty of spiritual fornication, for where among all parties and sects do we find a church that is not taught of the woman Jezebel to commit fornication and eat things offered to idols? Where do we find those who do not worship the image of anti-Christ? Where do we find the true, faithful shepherds who go in at the door? Where are those to whom the porter, or the Holy Spirit hath opened, that they may call the sheep and lead them from all strange worship and sinful idolatry, that the sheep know his voice alone and follow him, and that they will not follow the false spirits, but flee from them, because they know not the voice of strangers?' Then you go on and say, 'I for my part, could not find any such who were free from spiritual fornication, for the injurious spirit of freedom (non-restraint in matters of religion), has taken hold of all of them, so that they can all teach one with another out of dissembling hearts, and go on together in their hypocrisy, that they may be able to cast aside the cross of Christ and maintain the honor of men, and thus they have all drunken from the enchanting cup of the Babylonian whore.'"

"Now, please compare for yourself the last four quoted passages from your book, with the words of the apostle Peter,

Acts 10: 15, 'And the voice spake unto him again the second time, what God has cleansed that call not thou common,' and this was done three times. He also says further, 'God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean,' (Acts 10: 28), but you do not fear, not only to call one man unclean, but all the churches who do not agree with you, you not only call unclean, but under all parties, you say, 'Where do we find one church that is not taught of the woman Jezebel to commit fornication and eat things offered to idols.' O my friend, I fear it may yet be hard for you to kick against the pricks, for Jesus says (Matt. 18), 'See that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' The prophet Elias also thought that among the prophets he alone was left, but what saith the answer of God unto him, 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Rom. 11: 4. Now if the great Prophet Elias, could thus be mistaken in his view, you also should, at least think, that you too might err in your zeal; and as the Lord in the idolatrous time, knew how to preserve seven thousand men in Israel, so in our time, the Lord, no doubt, will know to preserve thousands of little ones, without your knowledge, whose angels always behold the face of their Heavenly Father, though you place them under Babel, because they are not willing to leave their church and join your sect."

"You write further, 'I am willing to appear before you and your entire church, and to place the doctrines which I have taught to the present time, into the balance of the word of God, &c.' This sounds boldly, but singular. Who ever asked you to do this? as any one who reads your book may readily examine your teachings and doctrines. You are willing to appear before me and my entire church; how strange! Where have I in my life time ever attempted to build up a church, separate from all others, and to place, or permit myself to be placed before her as her leader? The Mennonite Church, which in great poverty and weakness, by the help of God, I

seek to serve, had an existence, long before you and I, poor worms of the dust, were born, and her doctrines and confession of faith, according to the Martyr's Mirror, had its origin, in the time of the apostles and in their teachings, and there were also, according to the testimony of said book of martyrs, from century to century, those who sought to govern their lives and conduct in accordance therewith, though it may have been in weakness. There were also those who, from century to century, sealed with their blood, the doctrines and teachings above referred to, although these followers of Christ, who held to the doctrine of baptism on faith, did not all administer the outward rite of baptism alike, and were not altogether alike in some of their other outward requirements, they were, notwithstanding united and the same in the chief articles, as in true repentance to God, faith in Jesus Christ, and in truly following in his footsteps, and this same fact both Menno Simon and Detrich Philip also found in their time, and united with them, and by the grace and help of God, became instruments of great good to the up-building and progress of the Church of Christ, and have left us their writings, so full of instruction ; and every impartial person, who, by reading their works, or the writings of others, has become conversant with the times and the government under which these godly men lived, will no doubt be led to believe that they had great reason to shun the ruling churches in their day, and also to write against them as they did, inasmuch as the Pope and the ruling churches were the chief instigators, through whom the government was incited, with fire, water, sword and gibbet, to destroy the lives of the true followers of Christ, by multitudes.

"And since the doctrine and confession of faith above referred to, has been maintained during so many centuries and through so many changes of time until the present, and since also those have remained, who, though in weakness, have sought to order their lives and walk in accordance therewith, therefore I also believe with Detrich Philip as he writes in his

Spiritual Restitution, 'Thus also will this other spiritual temple and holy city of Jerusalem, remain until the coming and revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That there are, however, weak, sickly, and slumbering members in the Mennonite Church, even as there were in the Corinthian Church, while it was yet under the care of Paul, no Mennonite of experience will deny, and if you did not also have such in your church, we would have to conclude that you with your church, were in advance, even of the apostle Paul with the Corinthian Church.

"In the preface of your first book, you say, 'Fifthly, I have shown, briefly, why we have separated ourselves from the Mennonite Church, and why we will not hear them, but on the other hand we say openly that we did not leave the true Mennonite Church* which stood so gloriously several hundred years ago,' &c. This shows plainly, where you place yourself, viz: into the footsteps of the glorious church of the time of the Martyrs. But alas! alas! I will leave each one to examine and prove for himself, how the fine houses ornamented after the fashions of the world, which, according to the reports, are found among you, compare with the Mennonite Church several hundred years ago; yes, I will say, fifty years ago; and do you not yourself see, how that the spirit of gain and worldly wealth is among your people as among all others? and whence come the dangerous slanders, despisings and condemnations against those who do not agree with you, of which we have had to hear so much from some of your members, whom you have baptized as regenerated persons? But whether a person who has learned of Jesus, true meekness and sincere humility, can thus deal with his fellow man, I will leave every experienced Christian himself judge by the gospel.

"That there is but one church of God on earth, is correct, as I have already said, but whether your addition to this, which shows itself throughout your entire book, and which the last part of your discourse at Bauman's funeral also plainly showed,

*It will be remembered that John Herr never was a member of the Old Mennonite Church.

namely, that your church is the only visible remnant of the church of God yet remaining on earth, is correct or not, you will, no doubt, in the course of time learn, as you write on pages 235 and 236, 'Secondly, I believe that all faithful souls which truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, will, with the prodigal son, leave the communion of the carnal and impure men and turn to the Father, and by him permit themselves to be led to a church where they may obtain the true meat for their souls, and where they may rejoice with the household of the Father, namely, with the believing servants of God, who will bring forth the pure and best garment of righteousness and of the merits of Christ, and clothe them therewith, and the ring of the pure love of Christ they will put on his hand, and the pure gospel of Christ they will also bring and put on his feet, in which he will then walk and keep his commandments?' This passage I will also leave to every awakened and experienced Christian to examine for himself,—whether a poor, dying preacher can clothe the sinner that is hungering after grace, with the merits and righteousness, and give him the pure love of Christ, and reveal to him the power of the Gospel, so that he may walk therein, or whether Jesus, the blessed Savior, has reserved this power unto himself, so that he may give the penitent sinner rightly to know, how that he alone is his Savior. It is, however, the duty of every minister to do as did John, the preacher of repentance, namely, to point such souls to Christ.

"On pages 265, 266 and 267, you especially seek to convince your readers that your church alone is the right one, as already referred to, and with other things you say, 'Yea, only one church that has power to bind and to loose, and that which this church cannot loose by the word of God, or which for the sake of the teachings of Christ she cannot accept, must remain without, or the word of Christ, which is more enduring than heaven and earth, must be without virtue.'

"On pages 35, 87 and 90 you use the word 'Threefold,'

(Dreifaltigkeit). Of these words* we find nothing in the Scriptures, and the martyrs also rejected them. See Martyr's Mirror, Ger. edition, page 322, and other places. They have their origin, not in the Apostolic Church, but in the Papistical Church of Rome, and if you will examine this church further, you will find that strict Papists are not any more willing to hear your doctrine, than you are to hear them. You will also find that their firm belief is, that they are the only true church on earth, and that she alone has the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and hence, that she alone has the power to bind and to loose, and all who do not submit to their church, must remain without, and what has come out of this doctrine? Did they not by divine permission, in the course of time, come so far, that they declared, all who openly opposed their errors deceivers of the people and heretics, and they were put under their ban, after which usually followed, banishment or the Martyr's death.

"Then go and ask the Mormons and they will also tell you that their church is the last and only true one, and whosoever does not come into their church, will be lost, and, according to the accounts, we already see whither these doctrines lead, as we hear that they are training their men to the use of the death-dealing implements of war, and forming a military defense, and if God should permit them, as He has the Papistical Church, they will no doubt in accordance with this doctrine seek to exterminate their opposers as they (the Papists) have done, and probably think, in their folly, that they are doing God acceptable service. But now that I have referred to these two churches, do not misinterpret my meaning, as though I would compare you and your church with them. No, my friend, I still hope better things of you and your church. I have only referred to the doctrines of these churches, to call your attention and the attention of others to the danger there is in it, when a company of men form themselves into a church,

*As applied to God.—*Author.*

and determine that they alone are the right church, and that they alone possess the right doctrine, and the power to bind and to loose, and if you, too, had not settled upon this point, namely, that your doctrines and your church were the only right ones, and all others false, it would not have been possible for you, so heartlessly to condemn all other denominations, [and especially] those who still maintain and acknowledge a true gospel doctrine and confession, and in their weakness seek to live in accordance therewith, and which thousands have sealed with their blood, and to set them down as worshipers of idols and branches of the spiritual, Sodomitic vine, which have drank of the wine of the Babylonian whoredom; and if your followers had not also accepted your doctrines, how would it have been possible for them to call such churches as above referred to, blind and dead, and to proclaim her ministers *deceivers*." &c.

"The Scribes and Pharisees also believed the Jewish Church alone was acceptable to God, and some of them went so far as to say, 'That the people who knew nothing of the law were accursed.' They also thought that Christ the Redeemer of the world, was promised only to the Church of the Jews, and that the Gentiles had no part in Him; but how greatly were they mistaken in their views, not only in reference to the re-establishment of the secular kingdom of Judaism, but also in reference to his spiritual kingdom, for the Gentiles received a part in the Kingdom of Christ, as well as the Jews, and by far a greater number of Gentiles accepted the saving faith in Christ, than Jews."

"Therefore my friend, it is a dangerous thing for a person to seat himself as it were, into the Father's bosom, and endeavor to cast others out. Paul says not in vain, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' Christ also says, (Luke 14), 'When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him, come and say, 'Give place to this man, and thou begin with

shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go, and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

"You may, however, say, that in your book, you did not assert that your church was the only right one, as I have several times referred to. But if by the church which you claim to be the right one, you do not have reference to your own, where shall your readers find the true church? as you place all others under Babel.

"Herewith you have my answer and if it will serve to bring you and others to reflect and prove a benefit, I shall be rewarded for my labor. If, however, you reject it and seek to place me where you put the ministers of the Mennonite Church, in the fifth chapter of your book, namely, as unfaithful, deceivers and murderers, my prayer to a merciful God shall still be, that on my account he may not lay anything to your charge, for I wish you and all your fellow members eternal salvation as well as to others."

The foregoing letter was never replied to.

Thus we see how John Herr claimed to be a Mennonite of the purest water, a Mennonite as they were two centuries ago, in the days of the Martyrs, when the Church was yet, as he claims, in her glory, though he never united with the acknowledged Mennonite Church, but commenced his church as a separate organization, and endeavors to show that the line of succession, or the lineage of the church, her piety, her purity, and her glory, which she once possessed, had departed from the Old Organization and passed upon him and his church, and Musser freely acknowledges, that in order to justify themselves, in forming a new organization, they must be able to prove the Old Church corrupt and dead, and says, page 275, "The question of whether John Herr and his associates were justifiable in organizing the Reformed Mennonite Church, rests entirely

upon that of whether the Old Mennonite Church was, at the time, a dead or a living body. If she was a true, living church of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and led by him, then the others were not justifiable in the course they took, and it could not have been the Holy Spirit which led them to it, but much more an anti-Christian Spirit." On page 277 he further says, "If the Mennonite Church, at the commencement of the present century, was the Church of Christ, the same as they admit it was in the 16th century, John Herr and his associates, by their own profession, did wrong and were in no wise justifiable in organizing another. The Holy Spirit could not have led them to it, and conseqnently it could not have been of God, and must have been to him an anti-Christian and an idolatrous work, and an abomination in his sight."

From the foregoing the reader will see the reason why it is necessary for them to make so great an effort to prove the Old Church dead, namely, to justify themselves in organizing a new church. They are well aware that if they cannot do this, they, according to their own words, condemn themselves, and so rather than bring a fault upon themselves, or acknowledge their errors, as every sincere Christian ought to do, they use every means at their command to prove the Old Church dead, even at the expense of the truth.* But as we have shown that their accusations are false and that they have failed to prove the Old Church dead, it must follow that their course was unjustifiable, and that they had no Scriptural right to form a new church, and hence, *according to their own assertions and their own mode of reasoning*, the kind reader may judge for himself whether they can be the true, or the only true church of God, as they claim they are.

The true criterion whereby a tree is known, is the fruit it bears; so men and churches are known by their deeds, and as we are commanded by Christ not to judge, and Paul tells

*See also extract on page 19 and remarks on page 20 of this book.

us, to speak evil of no man, we will let the facts which we have presented, speak for themselves, and with all charity (for without charity we are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal), after the false accusations they have heaped upon us, we feel to pray for them, and sincerely wish them the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, as the hope of their salvation, without which all is in vain.

REMARKS AND INCIDENTS.

In confirmation of the fact that the fathers and prophets who lived under the Old Dispensation, previous to the coming of Christ, did possess the Holy Ghost, we have a very plain and decided testimony in the words of Paul (Acts 28 : 25), where he says, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers," &c. And another given by Jesus himself, where He says, Mark 12 : 36, "For David himself said *by the Holy Ghost*, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." The foregoing testimonies are not the opinions of men, but the words of inspiration, and the latter being given by Jesus himself, establishes the fact so firmly as to leave no further room for controversy.

An Incident.—In conversation with one of our old ministers, Brother B——, we made special inquiries, whether he remembered or had seen in the church anything that corresponded with the charges made by John Herr and Daniel Musser. He answered in the negative, and said that he particu-

larly remembered an instance, where a company of young people, with some older ones, had conducted themselves in an unbecoming manner, on a Sunday afternoon, and that those who were members of the church, were all required to account to the church for it. This incident transpired twenty years later than the time designated by Musser, but under the immediate supervision of the old ministers, who had lived already in the time of which Musser speaks, or if they were not then in the ministry, they at least received their instructions and commissions from the men who had lived during that time, and whose example and instructions they no doubt followed. This incident shows how watchful they were, not only that they themselves, but also that their members should avoid even every appearance of evil.

Abraham Godshalk, from whose writings, published in 1838, we made some extracts in a former part of this work, was born in Bucks county, Pa., in 1791, ordained to the ministry when about thirty years of age, which would have been about the year 1821. His work was written both in the English and German languages, in his latter days, probably in the same year in which it was published. The subject, however, had been dwelling on his mind for some years previously. The above facts I had intended to insert in their proper place, with my remarks on this subject, in the body of the work, but did not receive them until after that part of the work had been printed. Hence I give them a place here.

Another Incident.—The following incident is a valuable addition to the testimonies of the piety and devotion to the cause of religion, of the old ministers, already given. How great a contrast there is between the representations of our accusers and the character here shown forth !

A minister was conversing with an old brother in regard to the death of Bishop Jacob Brubacher, who died on the 16th of March, 1879. The brother said, he knew both his father and his grand-father (both were Bishops), and related an inci-

dent which took place in the days of the grandfather, in a village near Lancaster, now called Rohrerstown. The grandfather of the late Jacob Brubacher, (whose name was also Jacob, and is the same one mentioned in the preceding parts of this book), was passing through the village and saw some boys (not members of the church) playing ball. The old Bishop rode up to them and said in kind words, "O boys, this is wrong to play ball on Sunday; this you ought not to do." They quit playing, but the next Sunday one of the party wished to play again. One of the others, however, said, "No: I was ashamed last Sunday. You may play if you want to, but I made a promise to myself that I would not again play ball on Sunday, and I intend to keep it."

A GOOD LESSON for those who think they alone hold the keys to the kingdom of heaven is given us in the reproofs of the Savior to His disciples when they manifested a similar spirit. When they saw one casting out devils in the name of Jesus, they forbade him, because he followed not with them. But the Savior said, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us."

CHAPTER XIV.

OTHER MODERN REFORMERS AND THEIR CLAIMS.

Some thirty years after John Herr had risen up as a Reformer of the Mennonite Church, and so unscrupulously brought his unjust charges and accusations against her, Jacob Stauffer, to whom I have referred in a previous chapter, who was a minister of the Old Mennonite Church, was, on account of some difficulty, expelled from her communion, and then began to build up an organization of his own (though with very limited success), which he, like Herr, Musser and others, claimed to be the true church of God, and like them also brings many serious charges and accusations against the Old Church, and maintains that she had departed from the true faith and was a corrupted church.

In his writings, however, he endeavors to show, that during the very time, in which Herr and Musser would have the church so corrupt, her glory had not yet all departed, and that while he remained in the church, she still possessed a reasonable degree of life and spiritual power. He says that at the close of the last and the beginning of the present centuries, the church was not so dead and corrupt as Herr and Musser try to make it appear, but that the decay of the church commenced about 1800 and progressed gradually until 1840; that from 1800 to 1830 "Satan sought to bring this beautiful, fruitful church into decay, but according to his testimony he did not succeed, for he further says, 'There were in these years, yet many such true witnesses in the church who sought to avoid all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5: 22), and with a cor-

dial desire, by prayer, supplication and solicitation to God, and by His aid, sought to walk faithfully, pure and uprightly, in love before the Lord; and these always testified against the things before mentioned, and everything that tends to the decay, destruction and desolation of the church, to keep the church pure, clear, and separate from the world, whereunto Jesus ordained and called her.'"*

Then he claims that from 1830 to 1840 the decay of the church increased, and afterwards, about 1845–46, after he was separated or expelled from the church, and began to build up an organization of his own, the mantle of God's approbation fell upon him and his church, as in his writings, he also traces the history of the church from the days of the Martyrs down, and finds the true line of succession in himself, though to his credit we must say, that while to a large degree he manifests a similar spirit to that of Herr and Musser, he was much more moderate than they were.

Some twelve or thirteen years after Jacob Stauffer had made his appearance as the originator and leader of a new sect, another of these reformers and leaders of the only true and living church of God (of which our age is so prolific), made his appearance, in the church in charge of Bishop John Shaum, and Minister Peter Troxel, in Wayne county, Ohio, in the person of John Holdeman, who has brought himself into considerable notoriety through his efforts to build up and extend his church, both by preaching and writing, and in his claims and pretentions exceeds all the modern reformers of whom we have any knowledge, claiming to understand the fore-knowledge of God, to possess the "gift of prophecy," the expounding of mysteries, the interpretation of dreams, visions, &c., and places himself in a position so exalted that every one must be astonished at his boldness.

He united with the church in the above mentioned place, in 1853. He was baptized by Bishop Abraham Rohrer, and

*History of the Church of God.

told him before the services, on the day of his baptism, that he would be called to be a minister, and after being received into the church, he also claimed, like others whom we have noticed in the foregoing pages, that the church had departed from the old and true foundation and fallen into decay; but in his efforts to institute a reformation, in accordance with his views, he met with little success.

Having a strong faith in his dreams and visions and giving heed to these rather than to the word of God and the rules and traditions of the Church,* to which he had promised to conform himself, and being directed as he claims, by dreams and a direct revelation of the Spirit, he preached his first discourse on Sunday, January 24th, 1858, in his own house, to an audience of eleven persons, composed of his nearest family connections and neighbors, who had come to visit him on that day. This coming together of his friends and neighbors, and the delivering of his discourse, he claims to have been the fulfillment of a prophecy, which, through the Spirit of God, he had uttered a few days previously. In this discourse he spoke about two hours and uttered more prophecies, declaring that God would divide the church into two parts, and if this would not take place, he would be a liar and not sent of God, and that it should come to pass within the period of three years at farthest.

After some further contention and fruitless efforts with the Old Church, and the Bishops and Ministers of the same, in the effort to conform them to his ideas and his way of thinking, he separated himself from the church, and after a time began to preach regularly, and three other persons who were members of the church accepted his teachings, and went with him, and this is the division which he claims to have foretold in his prophecy, that God would divide the church

*The word of God is a full and sufficient guide to us in all things, and the Apostle Paul directs also to give heed to the traditions or rules of the church and to the instructions of the ministers. 2 Thes. 2 : 15 ; 3 : 6 ; Heb. 13 : 17.

into two parts, and now, following in the wake of Herr,* Stauffer and Musser (all of whom he likewise condemns), he holds that the Old Mennonite Church has departed from the true faith, become a corrupted and decayed church and that his church is the only remaining remnant of the church of God left upon earth. He traces the lineage of the church of God from the beginning of time, and brings it down from the days of the Apostles, through the Waldenses, Menno Simon, and Deitrich Philip, to the time he left her in 1859. Then he claims, as above stated, that the church had become corrupt, and because he endeavored to reform her of her corruptions, and mould her in accordance with his views, and she would not, that God departed from her and gave the token of acceptance and of the true church to him.

In his letter to John Shaum and Peter Troxel, as given on page 196 in his work, "History of the Church of God," he says, "God will no doubt propagate His church through us, both in the inward and outward ordinance and command, as long as we remain faithful; but God has departed so *far from you that he will not any more acknowledge your church as His church*, and will send you one confusion and disturbance after another, in such a manner that he will lead out from among you His faithful children and bring them into their proper home."† Again, page 222, he says, "Experience teaches us that the Old Mennonites are not willing to accept the old ground and live thereto. A. Rohrer was a gifted man —had the best gifts of any minister in his time—had gifts sufficient to bring the church to the proper ground if he had been willing as a certain revelation says; but as he was not willing, *God called me for that purpose.*" Behold, dear reader, how does this compare with the words of the Apostle Paul where he acknowledges that it was not meet that he

* John Herr also had a number of dreams and visions in which he put much reliance.

†This "proper home" evidently means Holdeman's church.

should be called an apostle, and that he had nothing to glory in save the cross of Christ and his own infirmities?

Thus Holdeman goes on and condemns all outside of his own church, setting himself up upon the very highest pinnacle of self exaltation, and claiming to be the chief representative of the only true church of God on earth, and also maintains, like Herr, Musser and Stauffer, that before the organization of his church, the Old Mennonite Church was a true and acceptable church of God, and that his own baptism, received in the Old Church, was a valid, Christian baptism, but that afterwards all baptisms administered by the Old Church were invalid, because then God had rejected the Old Church as a corrupted or decayed church. He frequently contradicts himself, and shows in his writings many inconsistencies and great weakness in the faith.

He claims that the Old Church, though a decayed church, was still the church of God until he left it. He says at one time that Bishop Abraham Rohrer had experienced a change of heart and preached in power, and afterwards, speaking of him, he says, God gave him a long time to repent and yet he did not repent. This would show that Bishop Abraham Rohrer was an impenitent man when he baptized him, and thus uniting with a decayed church, and being, according to his own declaration, baptized by an impenitent bishop, he yet claims that the church was a church of God, and his baptism a valid baptism, and this he does in order to establish his being called of God to the work, in which he is now engaged, and to prove the lineage of the church of God from the days of the apostles down to himself.

He strongly condemns in others, things which he does himself, as any one reading his book carefully, will readily see, and manifests a spirit of self-exaltation, that ill-becomes one who possesses the spiritual gifts and the measure of divine grace which he professes to possess. He claims to have been called to the ministry, like Paul, directly from God, without human instrumentality, while it is quite evident that the spirit

of self-exaltation which he so largely manifests, had much to do with it, though he complains that this accusation was brought against him, and positively denies it.

There are many other points which I could notice in this connection, but in this work, I shall not pursue the subject any further, having in contemplation a fuller discussion of his claims in a separate work. I have thus briefly referred to Holdeman's claims in order to show the similarity in them to all our modern reformers, their inconsistencies and their contradictory evidences, which the reader will readily observe. Herr and Musser, as we have shown, condemn our church as a dead church, long before the close of the last and the beginning of the present centuries ; this they do to justify their course of action in organizing the Reformed Church. Jacob Stauffer denies this assertion and claims that the church was still measurably pure until 1840, and that after he was expelled from the church in 1845–6, the church was most corrupt. Now comes Holdeman and claims that the church was yet a true and acceptable church of God until 1858–9 when he separated from her. and with his departure, God also departed from her, and she is now a rejected church. Alas, is not the human heart full of selfishness, and deceitful above all things ! Give us an impartial historian who will write the truth from an impartial stand-point, who will not allow himself to warp and shape history to suit his own views and sentiments; or who will not shade or discolor facts to justify himself and condemn others from selfish motives. "Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord ? and who shall stand in His holy place ? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He who declareth the truth, even to his own hurt and changeth not." Ps. 26 : 3, 4 ; 15 : 4.

I am personally acquainted with John Holdeman and our intercourse has always been of the most friendly character, and I have always entertained a very friendly feeling towards him ; but when men publicly assail and condemn the church

which I believe to be right, and which I love and cherish,—her faith, doctrines, customs and character, and seek to sow broadcast over the land, the errors, misrepresentations, inconsistencies and self-contradictions, which the men referred to in the foregoing pages have, they must not complain, when their erroneous teachings, their follies, and their inconsistencies are in like manner contradicted and exposed.

There are also a number of other modern reformers, and leaders of sects, who to a greater or less degree assume similar positions, but as they do not assume such high places, nor make any effort to bring their teachings and their accusations against the Old Mennonite Church, so prominently before the world, as those concerning whom we have written (though some of them may not be any less radical), I will drop the mantle of charity over their weaknesses and for the present leave the matter with the kind reader. I have shown to a sufficient degree the inconsistencies of these men, and how they exalt themselves above measure in their own selfish views, and greatly err, and thus exceed the bounds of the gospel, and lose that singleness of heart, which the teachings of Christ and His apostles so highly commend. I have also tried to show the dangers into which such errors lead, and hope, all who read this work, may try to avoid them.

CONCLUSION.

In writing the foregoing work, I have not written with the expectation of gaining the favor or the praise of men, and shall not be disappointed if criticisms and censures follow. The fear of censure and criticism, however, has not deterred me from saying what I felt that duty and the circumstances

required, and I hope I may always be able to do this. I have written carefully. I have written only what can be substantiated by proof and met with actual testimony. I have carefully considered every subject that presented itself and written in the fear of the Lord, asking for that wisdom which is from above to guide me aright, and that I might write only what was edifying and true. I have endeavored to do no injustice to any one. In the effort to present to the reader the course, actions and doctrines of our accusers, I have sought to reason from a correct stand-point, and to write with an impartial and an unbiassed mind.

Yet with all this the work has its imperfections, and might, by abler hands, have been done much better. This, however, is what, under the kind guidance and blessing of our heavenly Father, was given me to write, and this I have written, and now in the hope that it may do good, that its mission may be a blessing to the church and the world, I send it forth, and, kind reader, if the reproofs seem too sharp, or too severe, if you have found no special good or benefit in the exposing of the false and unjust accusations brought against the church, I sincerely trust that you may have found history, doctrines, admonitions and counsels that will amply repay you for the reading, and in the language of Scripture I would say, "Prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good."

I have given the reader a simple sketch of the accusations of Daniel Musser and others against the Old Mennonite Church, and also some of the erroneous and unscriptural doctrines which some of them teach. I have in my weakness, imperfectly as it may be, tried to show that these accusations are unjust, devoid of Christian charity and almost altogether false and untrue (I can use no milder term to express the truth), and I believe that the testimonies given, fully show this, though many others, also, not given might be produced. In reference to the erroneous doctrines advanced by Daniel Musser, I think the belief of the Old Mennonite Church has been fully vindicated, though given rather briefly. I have not

written with any feelings of unkindness or ill-will toward any of the men, or the churches mentioned, or the churches they represent, but simply to vindicate and assert the truth, and as a testimony of our church for the true doctrine of the Bible and the faith once delivered to the saints. Had these men not written as they did and placed the Old Church in so false a light before the world, and transmitted this false view and these misrepresentations to the records of history (and besides the reader will also remember that Daniel Musser expressly requested to be corrected, if in error), the necessity of such a vindication would not have existed, and I should not have written these things. But if the church or her representative men had remained silent after these things had thus been scattered broadcast over the world, history would tell to future generations, without a dissenting voice, the story of a dead, formalistic church, lying in the deepest degradation of moral corruption, a church possessing not one redeeming quality; history would tell to future generations the story of a perverted doctrine, and as no protesting voice was ever raised against these accusations, and these perversions of doctrine, they would naturally have to be accepted as truths, and our silence would confirm them, and we would be the unconscious witnesses, testifying to the truth of these false accusations and doctrinal perversions against ourselves. We are admonished to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and let us not fail to do it.

While we have sometimes used strong and forcible language in these criticisms, we have restricted ourselves to subjects, and the actions of persons, thrown open to criticism by our accusers; and in no case have we arraigned the private actions and dealings of individuals, with a view to lower them in the esteem of others; neither have we sought to degrade or malign the Church in its general character, but so far as her representative men have laid themselves, their actions and their doctrines, open to public criticism, we have not, and shall not

hesitate to deal with them as truth and the honor of God's kingdom may require.

We only wish to repeat that the love of the truth prompted us to this work. We claim for our Church no better reputation than she deserves. Her own actions, and the walk and conversation of her membership, will be her strongest testimony; with deep humility we acknowledge her many imperfections; we have nothing to glory in save our weakness; but where shall we find a church that has anything better?

Our Church has stood the storm of persecution for centuries; she has remained steadfast under many trials; she has been slandered, maligned, abused and misrepresented, but never destroyed; she has seen men who were with her, but not of her, who backslided and departed from her; she has seen unfaithful men, who loved the world and its honors more than God, Demas-like, depart from her, and with the most malignant spirit, heap their severest vituperations upon her, but bearing it all in Christian meekness, they could not rob her of her candlestick, nor take the light of heavenly glory from her, for the Lord was with her. The history of our Church is one of persecution and suffering, and remembering the meek endurance of our forefathers, and that these things according to the words of our Savior (Matt. 5 : 11, 12), are a mark of acceptability with God, we, with deep humility of heart, kiss the rod and accept the chastening of the Lord, believing that it is good for us; and we pray the Lord with all our hearts, "not to lay this sin to their charge," but to "forgive them, for they know not what they do."

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